DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

INDEX BUREAU
760h.75/18

SEE 760h.75/120 FOR # 749

FROM Albania (Holmes) DATED Jan.31, 1930.
TO NAME

1—1127 GPO

REGARDING:

conversation with the Albanian Foreign Minister in which he called attention to the reports current in Greece that there is a revolution in progress in Albania and that King Zog was on the point of death from cancer. The Minister seemed to think that there was evidence of concerted action between Greece and Yugoslavia to cause trouble for Albania.

mb/

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

768.75/19

SEE 875.00/297 FOR #46

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED July 17,1930.
TO NAME

1—1127 GPO

REGARDING: conviction of Harallamb Economidhi, charged with having received money from a Greek revolutionary Committee in Janina. Andon Muzina and Mihal Lici also convicted because of failure to report knowledge of matter to Albanian authorities. Efect of these convictions upon Greco-Albanian relations.

kn

Tirana, Albania,

No. 46. July 17, 1950.

Confidential.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that the Political Court at Tirana yesterday convicted Haralamb Ekonomidhi, who was charged with having received money from a Greek revolutionary committe in Janina. Anton Muzina and Mihal Lici, accused of having known of this act and failed to report it to the Albanian authorities, were also convicted.

After a secret conference, the Presiding Judge declared, in pronouncing sentence, that according to the testimony of witnesses and the local authori-

ties

authorities of the Prefecture of Argirocastro, it had been established that the defendants were guilty of receiving money from a committe organized for the purpose of violating the territorial integrity of Albania. Haralamb Thomaidhi, who was a teacher in one of the Greek schools in Albania, was sentenced to imprisonment for a period of twelve years, while Mazina and Lici were sentenced to eight years' imprisonment each. Brezhdani, who was charged with being an accomplice in this affair, was acquitted.

This morning, during the weekly conference with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Fitso, he made the following comment regarding this case:

"According to Albanian engagements with the League of Nations, the Government permits Greek schools in a few Cracophonic villages in the province of Argirocastro. The [illegible] of some of the teachers are paid by the Albanian Government. The other teachers were paid by the Cracophonic communities, in which the schools were located. The authorities seized compromising correspondence and account books showing that the salaries of these teachers were actually paid by the Southern Epirotic political revolutionary organization of Janina, presided over by the Metropolitan of Janina who was Minister of the Interior of the Northern Epirotic Government of Argirocastro, in 1915. We could not permit this revolutionary organization to meddle in our internal affairs any longer."

The evidence thus far made public is so flimsy that it would hardly seem to justify the conviction of these

men

men. Besides, it was undoubtedly a political mistake on the part of the Government to irritate Greece at a time when Greece expressed its readiness to adjust the claims of Albanians on Greek territory with regard to their property.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Herman Bernstein.

Copy sent to N. I. C.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

INDEX BUREAU
768.75/20

SEE 875.00/299 FOR # 53

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED July 31, 1930.
NAME

TO

1—1127 GPO

REGARDING: a conversation with the Greek Charge concerning the trial and conviction of Andon Muzina and his associates for having accepted Greek money for the maintenance of Albanian schools. The effect upon Greco-Albanian relations.

mb/

Tirana, Albania,

No. [illegible] July [illegible], 1930.

Confidential.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

Referring to my despatch No 46, dated July 17, 1930, I talked with the Greek Charge d'Affaires Takis E. Pipinelis, regarding the conviction of Anton Dumina, Haralamb Xhonoui and Mihal Litsi, charged with having accepted funds from Greece for their schools in Albania.

Mr. Pipinelis said:

"The trial was a travesty on justice. There was no direct evidence against these teachers. They may have praised Greek culture, but have not done

anything

anything that could have been construed as conducting political propaganda against Albania. I called on Minister for Foreign Affairs, Fitso, and told him that he must surely understand that as long as these men remained in jail, it would be useless to attempt to get a settlement of the Greek-Albanian differences, which were on the eve of being adjusted. Fitso assured me that these men will be set free within a few months. I hope he told the truth, but I shall not believe it until these men are actually released.

"I have asked my Government not to permit any demonstrations against Albania in connection with this unfortunate trial."

He then said that although the Albanians had promised before the League of Nations that racial, religious and linguistic minorities in Albania were to enjoy the same treatment and guarantees of rights as all other Albanian subjects, a large number of Greek schools have already been closed by the Albanian Government.

With regard to the recent trial, he pointed to extracts from the testimony by local Albanian authorities showing that there was no evidence against the men who have been convicted. Thus the Prefect of Argirocastro testified: "It is rumored that Anton Muzina is in the service of an anti-national organization abroad, whose purpose it is to spread propaganda in Albania against national unity and against the territorial integrity of Albania.

"As

"As for disturbing the peace, nothing has been disclosed in connection with the organization in question, but its purpose is to preserve the Greek spirit in the region of this Prefecture and in the future an occasion may arise which will disturb the order of things."

The Subprefect of Libohova testified: "In my two years of service here as Subprefect I have noticed that the special teachers of this district are being paid by Greece through a certain Greek organization in Janina, which sent money last year through the Litsi brothers. Their method of publicity is marvellous. Their purpose is to assure by any means the maintenance of Greek propaganda, and after they will have established their organization in Albania, they will disturb the peace."

The President of the Community of Georgutsat testified: "It was reported four months ago that the special teachers of the region of Argirocastro and of the Grecophonic villages, received their pay last August at the store of the Litsi brothers, but I do not recall exactly who gave me this information at the time. However, I am convinced that Mihal is involved in affairs detrimental to Albania."

Hertnani, inspector of education, testified: "I am acquainted with the Litsi brothers at Georgutsat and Dr. Kitsakis at Polichan. I do not know Andon Muzina because I have not visited Canti Amaranta. The Committee of Education at Janina is concerned with education only,

and

and I do not believe that it is pursuing political ends for the purpose of disturbing the peace or of carrying on propaganda."

The local newspaper Vullneti I Popullit, of July [illegible], published the following item:

"According to "Le Messager d'Athènes", a Greek newspaper published in French in Athens, the South Epirotic Societies of Athens and Patras have addressed to the Greek Government telegrams of protest against the decision of the Albanian Court for Political Offences, which convicted Andon Zhmina, Haralamb Ekonomi and Mihal Litai, all Orecophonies of Albanian nationality. The Societies express their indignation in this connection and request the Greek Government to take steps to secure the release of these persons who were exercising their rights as recognized in the treaties.

"A delegation representing the societies in question was received by the Greek Under Prime Minister, and demanded the release of the three Greeks and the recognition of the rights of Greek minorities in Albania. The Under Prime Minister, M. Mihalakopoulos, assured them that the Government would take the necessary steps, but warned the delegation against extremism."

Commenting on this news item, the editor of the Vullnetti, of Tirana, says that Mr. Venizelos had declared some time ago that the South Epirotic Societies had been disbanded. He asks the Venizelos Government to explain how these societies have come to life again.

The

The Arbenia, a Tirana newspaper, of July 31, reports that the verdict of the Political Court in the case of the three Greeks has not yet been confirmed by the Minister of the Interior. A delegation of two deputies from Argirocastro, Jusuf Durshid and Fejzi Alimati, Moslem Albanians, called on the Prime Minister and pleaded with him to release the three Greeks. It is believed here that the Greeks will be liberated after all.

M. Pipinelis' statement to the effect that a number of the Greek schools in the Prefecture of Argirocastro had been closed by the Albanian Government appears to be inaccurate.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Herman Bernstein.

Copy sent to Athens.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

INDEX BUREAU

768.75/21

760h.75

SEE 760h.75/128 FOR # 57

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED Aug.14, 1930.

TO NAME

1—1127 GPO

REGARDING:

conversation with the Yugoslav Minister in which he touched upon Greco-Albanian relations as affected by the closing of some of the Greek schools in Albania and the recent arrests of several teachers in the Greek schools in the Albanian Prefecture of Argirocastro.

mb/

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Tirana, Albania.

No. 87. August 14, 1920.

SECRET CONFIDENTIAL.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report a conversation with the Yugoslav Minister, Nastasievitch, several days ago, on the eve of his departure for Yugoslavia on a two months' leave of absence. Nastasievitch said:

"I had an audience with the King and spoke with him quite frankly. He was also frank. He asked me what I thought he could do to establish better relations between Yugoslavia and Albania. He knows very well that Italy has a struggle hold of him. He knows that the Italians have two candidates for the Albanian throne— Mustafa Kruja, an Albanian in Italy, and Shefket Verlaci, in Albania. The King naturally wants to liberate himself

from

from Italy's grip, but how? He asked me pointblank whether Albania could get a loan from Yugoslavia. I said that Yugoslavia had no money to loan to Albania. France is not sufficiently interested, nor is England. And even if they were inclined to help Albania financially, their aid would be suspected. The only country that is trusted by all is the United States. If Albania could get a loan in the United States, it would mean the salvation of peace in the Balkans. But such a loan would have to be properly controlled by Americans.

"I asked the King why he is spending 14 million gold francs on his army--about a half of the annual budget. I pointed out that it was entirely too much for Albania. The King agreed that it was too much, but said that within two years the expenditures on the army would be cut down substantially. Meanwhile the army was essential. Then I told the King that Yugoslavia wants nothing here but to see Albania's independence securely established, the King said to me:

" 'Six months ago I did not believe you. Now I do believe you.' "

Mastanoievitch remarked that he believed the King was really desirous to save himself from the Italians, but that he saw no way of escape. He said he also believed that he wanted to establish

better

better relations with Yugoslavia and other neighboring states. He mentioned that the French Minister had also been told recently by the King that he desired improved relations with France and Yugoslavia.

"If an agrarian bank, a Balkan Bank, could be established in Albania, with a reliable American in control, such an institution would also be an effective way of stopping the Italian influence, and of establishing stability here," said Vrbanesievitch. "Aside from the political pressure, the Italians make the Albanians pay about twenty five percent interest for credit at the Italian-controlled National Bank of Albania."

Speaking of Italy's representative in Albania, Durbanesievitch said: "Italy's real representative here is not the Minister but General Pariani. He is more intelligent, more shrewd, more suave and therefore more dangerous.

"The recent appointment of General Pariani on the gendarmerie commission shows the growth of Italian influence in Albania. The Italians now want to take charge of the gendarmerie also. I don't believe the King will accept the resignation of General Percy, the Englishman now in charge of the gendarmerie. But next year, when Percy's contract expires, he will go."

Referring to Greco-Albanian relations, Vrbanesievitch said:

"The

"The Albanian Government has closed some of the Greek schools in Albania from time to time under some pretext or another. The recent case against the teachers in the Greek schools in the Prefecture of Argirocastro is a further evidence of Albania's short-sighted policy in this respect. I am sure the teachers who have been imprisoned will be released some time in October, after the beginning of the school season. In the meantime these schools will be closed. The Albanians are closing Greek schools, and at the same time they are demanding protection of minority rights elsewhere. The Greek Minister, Kalas, who was recently transferred from Tirana to Belgrade, did not succeed in Albania, because, like the Italian Minister Sola, he believed in the policy of the mailed fist. But this kind of policy will not work in Albania."

When I asked Nastasievitch about the reported outrages in Kosovo, about the alleged massacres of Albanians by Yugoslavs in that region, Nastasievitch replied:

"If murders were committed in Yugoslavia, in Kosovo, the whole world would have heard about it. Surely the Italian press would have been full of it. Also the Albanian press. There is no truth in these rumors. Of course, the Albanians are displeased with the governmental policy of Yugoslavia in that region, but no murders are being committed by our Government.

In

In answer to my inquiry concerning the extradition of Selim Reshani, the assassin of the Italian officer, Giuseppe Chesti, in Scutari, Nastassievitch said:

"I have urged my Government to release the murderer. I said that we should be more concerned with the good will and opinion of the United States, England and France, than with the public opinion of Albania, or of Italy. What my Government will do in the matter I do not know as yet. I believe the man will be extradited.

"About ten days before the murder in Scutari I called on Minister for Foreign Affairs Fitso, and asked him what he intended to do with the list of 51 men whose extradition we had asked during the past two years. He answered evasively, saying that he was very busy, and that these cases were under consideration. When the murder occurred in Scutari, I said to Fitso: 'Why didn't you act upon the fifty [illegible] extradition cases all this time? Now it will be difficult for me to persuade my Government to have this man extradited. Nevertheless I will urge my Government to extradite the man.' My opinion is the Albanians really do not want the man extradited. I spoke to a number of them, and they expressed themselves in this sense. It was not as simple a matter as they tried to picture at first. There is apparently an Albanian officers' organization in Scutari, working against the Italians. And it is very likely that

this

this man, Colin Kenhani, acted in behalf of this organization. It was hardly a personal affair. I know the man will be hanged or shot as soon as he is brought back to Albania, and the people will never know the nature of his testimony."

In conclusion, Pantasievitch remarked:

"This is the storm center of Europe. Either the League of Nations or the United States should undertake something to guarantee the actual independence of Albania, if they are really concerned with establishing peace in Europe."

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Copy to Belgrade.

HB:HK

768.75/22

SIET 768.74/294

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

INDEX BUREAU
768.75/23

SEE 765.75/92 FOR #80

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED Sept.26, 1930
TO NAME

1—1127 o.p.o.

REGARDING:

Inability of Leon Melas, former Greek Minister to Albania, to improve relations between the two countries. (Amplification of despatch 16, May 22, 1930, file number 701.6875/6).

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 875.00/302 FOR #84

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED Oct.10, 1930

TO NAME

1—1127 GPO

INDEX BUREAU

768.75/24

REGARDING: Statement made by King Zog of Albania relative to the following differences between Albania and Greece:
Resentment in Greece due to the proclamation of the autonomy of the National Orthodox Church in Albania.
Schools of the minorities.
Land which belonged to Albanians in Greece.

Wi

"As for the political relations of Albania with her neighbors, I may say that the Government of Albania has adopted the principle of an open policy. That is why the relations of Albania with her neighbors can be discussed by us openly and frankly.

"There are three questions with regard to Greece, which have not found any solution up to the present moment:

"In the first line a great deal of resentment was stirred up in Greece by the proclamation of the autonomy of the National Orthodox Church. According to the doctrine of a free church in a free state, the Orthodox population of Albania, after Albania's declaration of independence, addressed itself in regular and proper form to the Patriarchate in Constantinople requesting its approval of the autonomy of the church in Albania. The Patriarchate ignored the church, and refused to come to an understanding with the delegation of the Orthodox population of Albania unless the Albanian Government intervened officially in this matter. This attitude of the Patriarchate was backed up by the Greek Government.

The Albanian Government suggested that the Greek Government intervene. Although Greek Orthodoxy is the official religion of Greece, the Greek Government declined to take this matter up with the Church and insisted that Albania which has no official state religion, should deal directly with the Patriarchate. The matter thus dragged on for several years, until finally the Orthodox population of Albania, in ritually constituted assemblies, proclaimed the independence of its Church. This absolutely legitimate and legal act on the part of the Orthodox Albanians was called arbitrary and illegal in Greece, and bitter attacks were made against the Albanian Government which had nothing to do with the whole affair.

The second point of discord is the problem of the schools of the minorities. The Albanian Government has opened schools in all the regions inhabited by the Greecphone minorities, and the number of schools is by no means smaller in these regions than in other parts of Albania. Thus Albania has respected the provisions of the minority treaties, affording the full benefit of education to Greecphones in Albania. The teaching staff of all these schools is paid by the Albanian Government, but notwithstanding this attitude of the Albanian Government, the teachers of the schools in these regions are subsidized by Varioepirotic clubs in Greece, something that could not be tolerated by the Albanian Government. The attitude of Albania on this question has called forth much resentment and ill-feeling in Greece.

On

"On the other hand, the situation of the Albanian minority in Greece is deplorable. There is not a single Albanian minority school in the whole of Greece. The Greek Foreign Minister, in reply to the Albanian Minister's complaints in Athens regarding this matter, has declared that there were no Albanians in Greece, that they were all Turks.

"The third problem that remains thus far unsolved is the question of land which belonged to Albanians in Greece. Greece has had difficult internal problems to solve. The refugees from Turkey had to be settled in Greece. So the Greek Government expropriated all the land belonging to Albanians, without any indemnification whatever. Albania has declared its willingness to accept for the Albanians 80% less than is actually due them, although nationals of all other countries have been fully indemnified.

"Albania and Greece have many reasons in common why they should cultivate the friendliest relations. Albania and Greece are neither Slav nor Latin. Both are the oldest nations in the Balkans. Their interests are the same. And it is most deplorable that these pending questions should be permitted to keep the two peoples apart.

AN RECD
BUREAU
DEPT. OF STATE
NOV 6 30

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Tirana, Albania,

No. 112.

October 23, 1930.

Confidential.

File
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOV 7 1930
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

FOR DISTRIBUTION
Copy to MID

INDEX BUREAU
768.75/25

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

FILED
NOV 17 1930

768.75

I have the honor to report that there are indications that the Greco-Albanian differences are about to be adjusted in the near future.

Yesterday I called on the Greek Chargé d'Affaires, Kimon Collas, and discussed with him the new, conciliatory attitude of the Albanian Government with regard to the settlement of the differences between Greece and Albania. Collas told me that during the recent meeting of the Assembly of the League at Geneva conversations were held between Medhi Frasheri, Minister of National

Economy

NE
11-15-30

Economy and Demitri Berati, Chief of the Political Section of the Albanian Foreign Office, for Albania and the Greek Minister for Foreign Affairs and Mr. Melas, Chief of the Political Section of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Greece, which resulted in a mutual resolve and promise to settle the outstanding questions between the two countries. A protocol was drawn up and signed at Geneva by the Greek Minister for Foreign Affairs and was brought to Tirana for Fitso's signature. Collas did not know if Fitso has yet signed, and stated that the document would be sent to the Greek Government through the Albanian Legation at Athens.

Collas said that his knowledge of the understanding reached at Geneva came altogether from Albanian sources, that for some unknown reason he had not received notice from Athens, adding that no communication has come from his Foreign Office for some time. He seemed worried about it.

Collas said that the Geneva protocol provides for the immediate settlement of all outstanding differences between Greece and Albania: (1) The indemnification of Albanian land owners in Greece whose property has been expropriated under the Greek agrarian reforms. (2) The problem of minority schools in both Greece and Albania. (3) The recognition of the Albanian Autocephalous Church by the Greek Patriarch.

After some discussion at Geneva it was agreed that the Albanian Government would send a commission to Athens to negotiate the settlement. This procedure was found

best

best as it would be difficult for the Greeks to bring all their records of the Albanian claims to Tirana.

Collas said that he found everybody, from the King down, friendly and anxious to settle finally all of the problems with Greece. He said that, although in some cases he had reason to doubt the sincerity of the protestations of a conciliatory attitude, he was impressed by the new atmosphere of friendliness which appears to be general. Collas seemed to be very optimistic about the new state of affairs and expressed confidence that the various questions can easily be settled.

The Greek Chargé said, in answer to my question if there are any schools in Chameris teaching the Albanian language, "There are no schools in Greece which are commonly known as minority schools, that is, schools supported and maintained by the minority community. There are, however, many schools provided by the Greek Government where the Albanian language is taught." He added that this fact is generally unknown in Albania, and that he had missed an opportunity of assuring the King that Albanian is taught in some Greek schools. The King is under the impression that Albanians in Greece have no opportunity to learn the language of their fathers.

As concrete evidence that the Albanian Government has changed its attitude toward Greece, Collas cited the release on last Tuesday of three teachers of Greek minority schools who had been arrested three weeks ago for accepting money from Greek sources. Collas said that the three men are of Albanian nationality and that he had no legal right to ask for their release. He had appealed to Fitso for

their

their liberation on the grounds that if the teachers were kept in prison, public opinion in Greece would react unfavorably and upset the new understanding.

This is one of the very few promises kept by Mr. Fitso. In all likelihood the teachers were set free by order of the King himself, who seems to be anxious to establish friendly relations with Greece.

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Herman Bernstein.

Copy to Athens.

Received

Ku

1 copy detached for Note.

Ku

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

INDEX BUREAU

768.75/26

SEE 875.4016 Greeks/4 FOR #128

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED Nov. 20, 1930

NAME

1—1127 OPO

REGARDING: desire of Albanian Government to establish a better understanding between Greece and Albania. Pardoning of Greek teachers in prison in Albania by King Zog. Promised visit of Venizelos to Albania.

dew

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Tirana, Albania.

No. 128. November 22, 1930.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that I have learned that on Independence Day, November 28, the King will pardon the three Greek teachers from Argirocastro now serving prison terms for having received funds from Greece for the Greek minority schools in Albania. The case of these teachers was described in my despatch No. 48, of July 17, 1930.

It is quite evident that the Albanian Government is anxious now to remove all obstacles that stand in the way of a speedy adjustment of Greco-Albanian differences.

I am also informed on good authority that

Venizelos

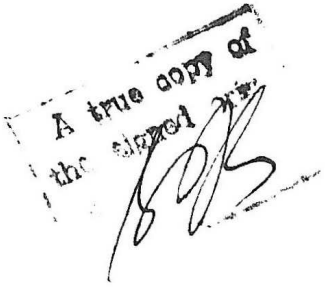
[redacted]

[redacted] has [redacted] to visit Athens within the next four months for the purpose of establishing a [redacted] between [redacted] and Athens.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]



DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

768.75/27

SEE 875.4016 Greeks/5 FOR #140

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED Dec. 4, 1930

NAME

TO

1—1127

REGARDING: Statement of the Greek Charge that the pardoning by King Zog of three Albanian teachers of Greek minority schools who had been arrested for accepting funds from Greek sources would assist in the settlement of Greco-Albanian differences.

Tirana, Albania,

No. 118. December 4, 1920.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

Referring to my despatch No. 46, dated July 17, I have the honor to report that on November 28, Albania's Independence Day, the three teachers, convicted to long terms of imprisonment for having received funds from a Greek revolutionary committee for the Greek minority schools in Albania, were pardoned by King Zog. Thus the King fulfilled the promise he had made some time ago to the Greek representative in Albania.

Mr. Gellas, the Greek Chargé d'Affaires, called at the Legation and expressed his extreme pleasure at the

the release of these three teachers. In his opinion the imprisonment of these teachers made it difficult for the Greek government to adjust the various Greco-Albanian differences, even though Venizelos was anxious to reach a friendly understanding with Albania. He said that this gesture on the part of the King would prove very helpful. He added, however, that many of the Greek minority schools in Albania were still closed, notwithstanding the repeated assurances that they would be permitted to reopen long before the end of November.

This afternoon the Prime Minister, Pandelli Evangheli, commenting on the pardon of the three teachers, said to me:

"The release of the Greek teachers, who were sentenced by the Political Court, has no bearing on the Greco-Albanian questions to be solved. These men were pardoned by the King because he thought the Political Court had imposed upon them too severe a sentence for a first political offense.

"Albania is most anxious to reach a friendly understanding with Greece and to adjust all the differences between these two countries. If the Greeks connect these matters with the case of the three Greek teachers, who are Albanian citizens, and say that this was one of the obstacles that stood in the way of our friendship, be it so, we have removed this obstacle."

Respectfully yours,

A true copy of the signed original.

Herman Bernstein.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 760h.75/133 FOR #146

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED Dec.18, 1930

TO NAME

1—1127 GPO

INDEX BUREAU

768.75/281

REGARDING:

Conversation with the Prime Minister and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs concerning relations between Greece and Albania, especially as concerns conditions along the border.

Wi

Mr. Brownell said:

"The situation in Albania is calm at present. With the exception of the earthquake in the Valona region, nothing of unusual importance has happened of late. Rain has fallen in the mountains, which pre-

vents

prevents the Government from doing any work on roads and bridges there. In other parts of the country, where the climate is mild, we are going ahead with our work.

"Reports have recently appeared to the effect that new troubles had occurred in Kosovo. But these incidents have been magnified. A small band from Yugoslavia crossed the border, stole two cows and returned to Yugoslavia. Such minor incidents are still happening, but not as often as before. We have taken up this matter with the Yugoslav Minister and he has given us assurances that stern measures will be taken by his Government to stop these irritating raids from across the border.

"I do not believe that the Yugoslav government sanctions these occurrences. But I do accuse the local authorities near the border. They could easily prevent these outrages. Instead of following their Government's instructions, they permit certain individuals to commit these irritating raids.

"No Albanians are even attempting to cross the Yugoslav frontier to steal or rob. The Yugoslav frontier is so closely guarded that a bird can hardly fly across without being observed by their guards. And still bandits cross the Yugoslav frontiers from time to time and return to Yugoslavia with their loot. I feel certain that the Yugoslav government is now making efforts to stop these outrages."

Referring to the visits of the Yugoslav Foreign Minister Marinkovitch and of Dr. Benes, of Czechoslovakia, in Athens, Mr. Svenghali said:

"These

Speaking of Greece, the Prime Minister said:

"Venizelos has expressed the desire to adjust the Greco-Albanian difference within a few months. Venizelos is a powerful statesman, but he cannot always carry out his intentions because there are others in Greece who place obstacles in his way. As a matter of fact our differences are very slight. There are but two or three minor questions between Albania and Greece that have to be solved. With a little good will on the part of the Greeks, these minor questions can be solved very easily. It should take less than a month to complete the job.

IN

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Tirana, Albania,

No. 205. February 27, 1931.

DEPT OF STATE DIV. COM. & REC.
MAR 12 31
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAR 13 1931
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS
LEAGUE OF NATIONS SECTION
MAR 20 1931
ART
COPY RETAINED
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
A-C/C
MAR 20 1931
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FOR DISTRIBUTION - CHECK Yes No
To the State
In U. S.
Copy to MID
768.75
768.75/29
FILED
MAR 25 1931
MAR 23 1931

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that Kimon Kollas, the Greek Chargé d'Affaires, informs me that his Government has asked the Albanian Government to appoint a commission to go to Greece for the purpose of adjusting all the Greco-Albanian differences. He said he believed that the commission would be able to settle all the questions within four months. According to Mr. Kollas, the Albanian Government informed him that the commission would be appointed as soon as King Zog returns to Albania. He added that while Mehmed Konitza was mentioned as the likely chairman of the Albanian

commission,

commission, he would hardly be an ideal choice because as a Moslem he would not be able to deal with the Church problem adequately. He expressed the opinion that Vasil Avrami, the Minister of Justice, would be the best man to negotiate in behalf of the Albanian Government. I doubt whether the Albanian Government will send Avrami as head of the Albanian Commission to Greece for the reason that Avrami is generally known as a strong Grecophil.

Mehmed Konitza tells me that he would not accept an appointment on such a commission because he was sure that no matter how satisfactorily he settled the Greco-Albanian differences, he would be criticized in Albania and would be accused of personally profiting by any arrangements that might be made.

Premier Pandeli Evangheli, referring to the Greco-Albanian relations said to me this morning:

"We have constituted a committee to study all the points that may be raised in the course of the negotiation. The Committee will report to the Government, and as soon as the King is back in Albania, we will be ready to proceed with the negotiations."

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Herman Bernstein.

Copies to Rome and Athens.

File No. 710.

HB/sjs

RECD

DEPT. OF STATE DIV. COM. & REC.

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Tirana, Albania,

No. 240. April 23, 1931.

MAY · 7 31

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAY 8 1931
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
MAY 5 1931

FOR DISTRIBUTION - CHECK
To the F...
In U. S.

Copy to M I D

768.75/30

FILED
MAY 18 1931

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that I have been informed by Kimon Collas, the Greek Chargé, that he was received by King Zog a few days ago and transmitted to him his Government's request for the appointment of a Commission to go to Greece for the purpose of adjusting the Greco-Albanian differences. He informed King Zog that the Greek Government was now very eager to remove any causes of friction between Greece and Albania.

Zog

Zog replied that these minor problems could not cause any friction, and that he would appoint a Commission in the near future. Collas said that he was pleased with the change in the relations between the two countries, especially with regard to the Greek minority schools in Albania.

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Herman Bernstein.

Copies sent to Athens and E.I.C.

HB/sjs
710

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 775.00/6 FOR #308

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED July 31, 1931

TO NAME 1—1172 GPO

768.75/31

REGARDING:

Statement of the Albanian Minister for Foreign Affairs concerning Greco-Albanian relations. Treatment of the Albanian minority in Greece.

Wi

Asked about the progress of Greco-Albanian relations, Vrioni replied:

"You have doubtless seen in this morning's newspapers the report from Athens to the effect that fifty Albanian soldiers were killed in order to conceal the plans of newly constructed fortifications. Of course, this report is a deliberate falsehood. Every time our neighbors on the South and the North hear of a step of progress made in Albania, they broadcast stories that an attempt on the life of our King was made, that a revolt has broken out in Albania, and other false news. This shows how our neighbors love us.

"I am receiving telegrams from Greece telling me of the misery of the Albanians in that country. I have kept the Greek Minister in Tirana informed of these reports, but nothing is being done to improve the condition of the Albanians in Greece. In regard to Greco-Albanian relations, we have been expecting to be informed by the Greek Minister that he had received instructions to enter into negotiations with us regarding the problems to be solved, but thus far no instructions were received by him."

The Greek Minister, Kimon Collas, formerly Chargé d'Affaires here, has been waiting now for almost five weeks to present his credentials to the King. Collas has told me several times that he is disgusted with the changed attitude toward Greco-Albanian problems ever since Vrioni

Vrioni has become Minister for Foreign Affairs. He said that the Greek Government was anxious to arrive at an understanding with the Albanian Government, that Venizelos in particular was eager to have the Greco-Albanian differences adjusted, that he asked for the appointment of an Albanian Commission to be sent to Athens, that the King had promised him such a commission would soon be appointed, and that Mehmed Konitza was asked by the King whether he would be willing to accept the chairmanship of such a commission. But according to Collas, ever since Vrioni entered the Cabinet, all sorts of obstacles have been placed by him to obstruct the progress of Greco-Albanian negotiations.

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Copy to Athens and Belgrade.

HB/LJS
710.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

768.75/32

SEE 760h.75/150 FOR #318

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED Aug.13, 1931

TO NAME 1—1172 ors

REGARDING:

Conversations with the Minister of the Interior and the Chief of Staff of the Albanian Army relative to a rumored engagement between Albanian and Greek soldiers and the construction of fortifications at Argirocastro.

W1

Tirana, Albania,

No. 510. August 15, 1931.

Confidential.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report a conversation with Musa Juka, the Minister of the Interior, who called at the Legation a few days ago and talked about Albania's relations with Yugoslavia and Greece. Musa Juka was the dictator in Albania during King Zog's absence in Vienna.

Musa Juka said:

"It is not for me as Minister of the Interior and as an Albanian to tell you that the country is tranquil. You can see for yourself that it is very

safe

safe to travel to the remotest and wildest parts of Albania.

"The Yugoslavs have until recently caused us much trouble. They sent bandits into Albania from across the frontier to kill and rob, and these criminals were permitted to return and were given shelter in Yugoslavia.

"About six months ago I had a harsh talk with the Yugoslav Minister, Nastassievitch, at my office. That was while the King was away in Vienna. I said to Nastassievitch: 'Mr. Minister, I am not going to talk as a diplomat or as the Minister for Foreign Affairs. I am going to talk to you as the Albanian Minister of the Interior. Our frontier is not closely guarded. We cannot afford to guard our entire frontier closely. Your frontiers are well guarded. And yet, in spite of this, bandits come from your country into Albania, kill and rob some of our people, and go back to Yugoslavia. There is not a single instance of an Albanian crossing the Yugoslav frontier to do mischief. I am convinced that these bandits who cross our frontier from Yugoslavi do this with the permission of your Government.'

"Nastassievitch denied this vehemently. I became very nervous and told him that this must stop or I would retaliate. I almost lost control of myself. He too was very nervous. I said to him: 'The King is away. I have the responsibility for the maintenance of peace and order in the country. I am warning you now that if within three days these bandits will not stop entering Albania from Yugoslavia, I will send to Kosseva three bands of five men

each

each and, acting upon my instructions, they will cause you so much trouble that twenty of your batallions will not be able to maintain order. And when you will make your diplomatic representations endeavoring to prove the guilt of the Albanian government, I will deny the whole affair just as you are now denying the guilt of the Yugoslav Government.'

"That same afternoon Nastassievitch started for Cetinje by car. I understood that he conferred with the Governor of Cetinje, - Ipek, Djakova and Prizrend being under his jurisdiction, - and next day Nastassievitch returned to Tirana and admitted to me that what I had told him was true. But he explained that the Yugoslav Government had absolutely nothing to do with these bandits, that the Government was not aware of the situation, and that it was the work of the local officials who had abused their duties. I said to him: 'You claim to be a great and cultured people. We are a small and uncultured nation. How is it that your officials abuse their duties and encourage these crimes, while my uncultured officials never abuse their duties?'

"Since that time the bandits have ceased coming to us from Yugoslavia. The frontier line is now tranquil and one may travel along it without fear.

"I am fully convinced that Nastassievitch was sincere when he denied the out ages, for he knew nothing of what his government was doing.

"The recent news reports from Greece that we are building fortifications in Argirocastro and that 45 soldiers, Greeks and Orthodox Christians at that, were killed by our

authorities

authorities in order to conceal the fact that we had built fortifications there, are entirely false. About three weeks ago there appeared a report in the Greek newspapers that a conflict between Albanian and Greek frontier guards had taken place and that 27 soldiers were killed. There was no such conflict. What happened was this: three Greek soldiers had lost their way and walked into Albanian territory. The soldiers were taken by the Albanian guards and delivered to their officer and sent across the frontier . That was the end of the whole affair, for our guards were convinced that the Greek soldiers had merely lost their way.

"I can't understand why the Greek press is publishing these wild stories and exaggerations about Albania. Our relations with the Greek Government are excellent. We have reached the point when our differences with Greece are about to be adjusted definitely. That is why I am all the more puzzled to see these outrageous falsehoods about Albania in the Greek press. And I am assured by my press bureau that some of these false reports have appeared in a newspaper that is known to be a semi-official organ."

The stories in the Greek newspapers about the murder of the soldiers who had worked on the fortifications are indeed fabrications.

General Von Myrdasa, Chief of Staff of the Albanian army, commenting on this Greek story and the fortifications at Argirocastro, remarked to me the other day:

"The report is absurd. There are no fortifications near Argirocastro. If they said something about fortifi-

cations

fortifications at Elbasan or Scutari, that would be quite another matter."

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

HB/sjs
710.

A true copy of the signed original. KK

Copies to Rome, Belgrade and Athens.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 875.00/331 FOR #345

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED Sept. 23, 1931

TO NAME

1--1127 OPO

REGARDING: False rumors about brigandage in Albania started by a Greek Club known as the Northern Epirotic Union, with a membership that is opposed to the policies of the Greek Government with regard to Albania.

768.75/33

768.75

las

Tirana, Albania,

No. 545. September 25,1931.

Confidential.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report conversations with Premier Evangheli and Minister for Foreign Affairs Vrioni.

Premier Evangheli said:

"There is complete tranquillity in Albania. Occasionally there is some slight trouble in the remoter parts of the country, but the trouble-makers are quickly apprehended.

"Our unfortunate situation is that we have no food this year. Although Albania should produce food more than sufficient for the population, we are com-

pelled

compelled to spend money to import bread from abroad. We will have to suffer this year, but I hope that by next year this question will be solved. We are reducing expenses and making savings in order that we may cope with the situation this winter. With these savings we will buy corn for the people. The deficit in the present budget will be covered by the new loan.

"My government is in a most difficult predicament, but I have great hopes that we will be able to meet the situation successfully. We are now supplying our peasant population with seeds and farming machinery, and I feel certain that next year's crops will be good.

"The most unfortunate feature of this sad situation is that the very people from whom the government expected to collect taxes have nothing to eat. Certain districts will have no food whatever two months from now. But the Albanians are a good people. They will not take advantage of the crisis to cause the government any trouble."

Foreign Minister Vrioni said:

"Thus far no definite decision has been reached with regard to the Conference of Balkan States to be held in Istanbul next month, nor has anything definite been done about the proposed Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Balkan States. We have received no invitation to a conference of the Foreign Ministers.

"Albania has signified her willingness to participate in the Balkan Conference and is sympathetic toward the proposal for a Balkan federation, but up to the present time no other country has expressed itself clearly on this subject. Of course, the principal question to be resolved

before

before a federation is possible is the question of minorities and unless an agreement is reached on this matter before the conference is held, I do not believe it can succeed. There are many Albanians in Greece and Yugoslavia. In Yugoslavia, for instance, our people are severely punished if Albanian books are found in their homes. Such a policy is neither humane nor wise, for it goes without saying that foreigners can not be absorbed in that manner and that during the period of transition they must be permitted to use their native language.

"Concerning our relations with Greece, I am happy to say that no important questions are pending. The only questions to be solved are: the payment to Albanians for property confiscated by the Greek Government, and border troubles. Regarding the first of these questions, I may say that it will be solved as soon as it is decided how payment is to be made to the Albanians. I have had various conversations with Mr. Kollas, the Greek Minister at Tirana, and he has reported to the Greek Foreign Office that the Albanian Government desires payment to be made by the Greek Government direct to the individual claimants. However, nothing definite has been agreed upon, as Premier Venizelos has been absent from Athens, and the Greek Foreign Minister is at present in Geneva. Mr. Kollas has not gone to Geneva to confer with the Greek Foreign Minister regarding this matter.

"As for the reported border troubles, there is in Greece a Club known as the Northern Epirotic Union, with branches in Corfu, Janina and Salonika, with a membership

that

that is opposed to the policies of the Greek Government with regard to Albania. This Club is the source of most of the false rumors about brigandage in Albania. The Greek press frequently reports border incidents which never occurred. You will recall some time ago there was a report that forty five Greeks had been killed by Albanian soldiers. I was pleased to learn that when M. Venizelos recently visited Saloniki he made a public statement to the effect that the published report was false. I was also pleased to note that the Greek Premier said that Greece was anxious to settle all pending questions with Albania without delay.

"As far as the change of the form of government in Yugoslavia is concerned, I believe it will experience some difficulties before it settles down to a working basis. There is bound to be a clash between the elements that desire a dictatorship and those who want representative or constitutional government. It remains to be seen what the people of Yugoslavia want. If they support the constitutional government, it will succeed."

Before leaving for Geneva, the Greek Minister, Kollas, said to me regarding his negotiations with the Albanian Government:

"It is most difficult to work with the Albanians. One never knows exactly what they want. My impression is that Foreign Minister Vrioni himself does not know what he wants. When I presented my credentials to King Zog on September 1, after waiting for the audience for months, I was assured by him that he was eager to establish the most friendly

relations

relations with Greece and to reach an understanding regarding all pending differences between our countries. The Minister for Foreign Affairs has not yet given me a clear idea of what the Albanian government wants. The only thing he made clear to me was that they insist that payment for the confiscated property be made by the Greek government not to the Albanian government but direct to the individuals concerned. He also assured me that the questions of the church and of the schools will be settled soon. My firm belief is that as soon as the Albanian property owners have been compensated by the Greek government, the Albanian government will not do anything further to arrive at a solution of the other questions.

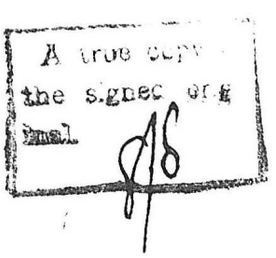
"Recently a Greek soldier crossed the Albanian frontier by mistake. He was arrested by the Albanian guards and taken to the officer in charge, to whom he made a satisfactory explanation. He was then to be handed over to the Greek frontier authorities, but on the way he was shot, on the pretext that he had attempted to escape. Mr. Vrioni sent a representative of the Foreign Office to express to me his Government's regrets at this unfortunate incident and to assure me that steps have now been taken by the Albanian authorities to prevent the recurrence of such incidents."

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Copies to Athens and E.I.C.

HB/sjs
710



LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Tirana, Albania.

No. 451. January 31, 1932.

Confidential.

AM RECD
DEPT. OF STATE
DIV. COM. & REC.
FEB 18 1932
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
APR 7 1932
Copy to MID
APR 9 1932
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
768.75/34
FILED
APR 11 1932

768.75 noted
868.4016 Albanians

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report a conversation with Foreign Minister Vrioni concerning the present status of the negotiations for the adjustment of the differences between Greece and Albania.

Mr. Vrioni said:

"The Greek Government recently accepted in principle our suggestions for the settlement of the question of property owned by Albanians in Greece and confiscated by the Greek Government. Instead of paying the Albanian Government a lump sum, the Greek Government will pay the individual owners.

"The

"The appraisal of these properties by the Greek courts is very inadequate and unfair. In addition to the low price fixed by the courts, the Greek Government wants a further reduction of one-fifth of the fixed value of the property on the ground that these regions had been captured by Greece from Turkey. This applies to properties in Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace. Besides, the owners are to be charged for the maintenance of the Expropriation Commission. And after all this, the Greek Government wants to pay the owners in bonds which may be redeemed at a discount of from 25 to 30 percent. Thus there will be very little left for the owners in the end.

"We demanded that the properties of the Albanians be appraised upon the same basis as properties belonging to other nationals. But the Greek Foreign Office tells us that cannot be done. British, French and Italian nationals were paid the full value of their confiscated properties. Mr. Collas, the Greek Minister in Tirana, explained that British nationals were treated differently because England had granted a loan to Greece.

"For the past six years the Albanian owners of land in Greece have been deprived of all incomes from these properties. During this time they were thus compelled to contract debts. When they receive the price now offered by the Greek Government for their lands, and pay their obligations, they will hardly have anything left. Some time ago the Greek Government offered to

pay

pay the Albanian Government a small lump sum for all these properties, but we declined to accept it. Moreover, the Greek Government wanted to extend that small sum over a period of six years.

"We have such a strong case that if we were to take it before the League of Nations of the Hague Court, we would easily win. But we don't want to do that now. We are very anxious to establish friendly relations with our neighbors. The Greeks would resent it if we appealed to the League of Nations at this time. A few weeks ago Mr. Collas told me that we would have received the money long ago if we had not complained to the League of Nations about it. We did complain to the League three years ago. Now we are ready to make substantial sacrifices in order to establish good relations with our neighbors.

"There are other questions to be solved between Greece and Albania. One of them is the problem of the minorities. The Greek minority in Albania has what it desires. It has schools in which Greek is taught and churches in which services are held in Greek. In Chamuria, on the other hand, there is not a single Albanian school and not even the smallest office is held by an Albanian of Greek nationality.

"The question of the Treaties of Extradition with our neighbors is also to be settled. We have the treaties, but they are not being observed. If an Orthodox Albanian commits a crime and manages to escape to Greece, he is not

extradited

pay the Albanian Government a small lump sum for all these properties, but we declined to accept it. Moreover, the Greek Government wanted to extend that small sum over a period of six years.

"We have such a strong case that if we were to take it before the League of Nations of the Hague Court, we would easily win. But we don't want to do that now. We are very anxious to establish friendly relations with our neighbors. The Greeks would resent it if we appealed to the League of Nations at this time. A few weeks ago Mr. Collas told me that we would have received the money long ago if we had not complained to the League of Nations about it. We did complain to the League three years ago. Now we are ready to make substantial sacrifices in order to establish good relations with our neighbors.

"There are other questions to be solved between Greece and Albania. One of them is the problem of the minorities. The Greek minority in Albania has what it desires. It has schools in which Greek is taught and churches in which services are held in Greek. In Chamuria, on the other hand, there is not a single Albanian school and not even the smallest office is held by an Albanian of Greek nationality.

"The question of the Treaties of Extradition with our neighbors is also to be settled. We have the treaties, but they are not being observed. If an Orthodox Albanian commits a crime and manages to escape to Greece, he is not

extradited

extradited by Greece because there he is considered a Greek. Greece still believes that all Orthodox Christians of the Balkans are Greeks. Recently we protested a ruling of the Court of Appeals in Corfu, which endeavored to interpret the Extradition Treaty as giving immunity to the Orthodox Albanians. This is the old mentality which the Greek inherited from the Turks. We have no capitulations in Albania, but the Greeks are trying to create a situation in which they could have a finger in our internal affairs.

"Then there is the recognition of our Autocephalus Orthodox Church by the Oecumenical Patriarchate. Greece wants the Patriarchate to solve the Albanian Church question in accordance with Greek aims, in order that the Greeks may have, through the Church, a nest for Greek propaganda. We cannot permit a situation which may jeopardize our independence. We will not tolerate a state within a state. It would not be difficult for our Church to deal directly with the Patriarchate if the Greeks were not behind it. The Patriarchate is rather favorably inclined to adjust the problem.

"The time will come when the correspondence regarding all these questions will be published. Then the world will learn how reasonable we Albanians have been, how many sacrifices we have made, and what good will we have shown in our efforts to reach a friendly understanding with our neighbors.

"The question of confiscated lands owned by Albanians

banians in Greece was almost at the point of being solved, when the Greek Minister informed me that his Government wants us to make a formal declaration that Albania will honor the rights of Greek minorities in Albania. I said to Mr. Collas that we would make such a declaration, provided Greece made a similar declaration with regard to the rights of the Albanian minority in Greece. He answered that Greece could not do that, for if it made such a statement with regard to the Albanians, it would also have to do it with regard to the Bulgarian, Yugoslav and Roumanian minorities in Greece. My reply was that there are also Yugoslav, Bulgarian and Roumanian minorities in Albania.

"We would be happy if the Greek Government fulfilled its obligations regarding minorities, as stipulated in the Treaty of Sevres. We were not a party to that Treaty, but sometime afterwards we made a declaration to the League of Nations that we would respect the rights of minorities. We do not differentiate between Albanians and the minorities residing in Albania. A number of persons belonging to the minorities are holding high posts in Albania. Some of them have been elected to our Parliament. But in Greece an Albanian cannot even aspire to the lowest government job.

"If the affairs between Albania and her neighbors were to be considered before a fair tribunal, the facts would prove that we have observed our obligations conscientiously, while our neighbors have failed to observe theirs."

The

The Greek Minister told me recently that King Zog had promised to make a declaration with regard to the rights of minorities in Albania, but that the Foreign Minister and the Minister of the Court now informed him that there was no need for any new declaration on this subject, as Albania's declaration had been made long ago to the League of Nations. Collas said that they told him that instead of a general statement concerning the minorities, the King would be willing to make a declaration with regard to the rights of the Greek minority schools in Albania. Collas telegraphed to his Government, inquiring whether such a limited statement would be acceptable. The Greek Government's answer was that even this statement would be acceptable since they were anxious to settle the pending questions with Albania without further delay, in order that friendly relations may be established between the two countries. After notifying the Albanian Government of this answer, Collas said, the Albanian Government again demanded that a reciprocal statement concerning Albanian minority schools be made by the Greek Government. Mr. Collas expressed himself as being thoroughly disgusted with the methods of the Albanian officials in dealing with the Greco-Albanian differences. He said that he asked for an audience with King Zog, believing that the King would remove the obstacles placed in the way by his Ministers, but he has been

waiting

waiting for the audience for more than a month, and thus far no appointment has been made.

Judging from Mr. Collas' evasive answers with regard to Albanian minority schools in Greece, the Albanian Government's attitude in this matter appears to be justified.

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Herman Bernstein.

Copy to Athens.

HB:KK
710

5 Carbon Copies
Received
1 copy in D.C.R. & L.E.B.

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

RECD
DEPT. OF STATE
DIV. COM. & REC.

No. 479.

Tirana, Albania,
March 26, 1932.

Confidential.

APR 19 32

SUBJECT: Greco-Albanian Relations.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
APR 23 1932
A.C/C
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

FOR DISTRIB.

Copy to M.I.D

768.75/35

768.75
mtc
368.7551
875.4016 Greek
868.4016 Albanians
768.404

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

APR 2 1932

Sir:

With reference to my despatch No. 451, of January 31, 1932, I have the honor to report that the King has appointed a committee for the purpose of adjusting Greco-Albanian differences. This committee is composed of Mehmed Konitza, Djafer Villa, former Minister to Belgrade and newly appointed Minister to Athens, and Demètre Beratti, Secretary General of the Foreign Office.

APR 26 1932

FILED

Mr. Konitza informs me that he will leave shortly for Athens where he hopes to be able to reach an understanding with the Greek Government regarding all the three pending questions,--the confiscated Albanian

properties

properties in Greece, the minority schools, and the recognition of the Albanian Orthodox Church. Mr. Konitza tells me that he advised the King to reopen the Greek minority schools that have been closed, in order that all these schools may be functioning by the time he reaches Athens. This, he said, would remove the cause of the Greek Government's complaints, and would also enable him to demand justly that the Greek Government establish a few Albanian primary schools in Greece.

875.4016- Greek
868.4016- Albanian

As for the Church question, Konitza tells me that, at the King's request, he had conferred with the Patriarch during his recent visit to Istanbul and that the Patriarch was willing to recognize the Albanian Orthodox Church on condition that the present head of the Church, Archbishop Vissarion, is removed. Konitza said he believed the King would be willing to sacrifice Vissarion, if such sacrifice would solve the Church problem between Greece and Albania. Konitza said the Archbishop would be granted a pension of a Napoleon (about $4) per day for life.

875.404

Archbishop Vissarion, in the course of a recent conversation, said that the Greeks were intriguing again, endeavoring to have him ousted, in order that a Grecophile Albanian bishop may take his place, and that the Greeks may thus spread their political propaganda through the Albanian Church. Vissarion said that he had talked with the King about the situation and that the King had recently promised him that he would permit no

Greek

Greek intrigues to interfere with either the Albanian Church or with him as head of the Church.

Several days ago the Greek Minister, Mr. Kimon Collas, after waiting for about ten weeks for an audience, was received by the King, and was assured that the Greek minority schools in Albania would soon resume functioning regularly.

Referring to his conversation with the King, the Greek Minister said:

"The King was very kind and courteous, as usual. He promised to do all in his power to remove every obstacle, and to expedite the adjustment of the Greco-Albanian differences. But I don't believe he will do anything with regard to the Greek minority schools. I have heard these promises many times before."

The Greek Minister is not a very skilful negotiator. He does not seem to understand the psychology of the Albanians. He is constantly harping on the School and Church questions, instead of first arriving at an understanding regarding the properties owned by Albanians in Greece and confiscated by the Greek Government. Both Governments have indicated that they are willing to settle this question which affects a considerable number of persons who are suffering extreme privations as a result of the delay. The Greek Minister insists that the Greek minority schools be not interfered with by the Albanian Government, on the ground that such a

measure

measure would create an impression upon public opinion in Greece. The Albanians say that the Greek Minister's demands, if made public, would intensify the friction between Albania and Greece in view of the fact that the Greek Government has not permitted any Albanian minority schools to be established in Greece.

I am inclined to believe that Mehmed Konitza, who is King Zog's shrewdest adviser, will be able to reach a satisfactory agreement concerning Greco-Albanian problems with Premier Venizelos, who knows him well and who is reported to be in favor of ending the disputes between Greece and Albania.

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Copies to Athens and E.I.C.

HB:KK

4 Carbon[illegible] pies

[illegible] F.P.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 775.00/11 FOR #556

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED July 28, 1932

TO NAME

1—1127 o f o

768.75/36

REGARDING:

Settlement by the Greek Government in the matter of the confiscation of Albanian property remains unadjusted.

36

Wi

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 398. Tirana, July 30, 1932.

Confidential.

SUBJECT: Talk With Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hussein Vrioni, Criticizing the Yugoslav and Greek Governments and Press.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report a conversation with Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hussein Vrioni, on July 30th, in the course of which he talked bitterly about the Yugoslavs and the Greeks. He started out by saying that while everything was moving ahead normally and all was quiet within the country, the press of Albania's neighbors was publishing inventions against Albania and declining to make public any of the denials sent out by the Albanian Government.

"As illustrations, I may mention the following incidents," said Vrioni. "Some time ago the Albanian Archbishop Visarion visited Bucharest to attend a conference of the churches for the maintenance of

peace

peace in Balkans. Immediately upon his arrival there the press of Yugoslavia and of Greece commenced the publication of anti-Albanian inventions. The Greek press was instigated by the Metropolitan of Athens. The Greek newspapers wrote that Visarion was in Bucharest to seek the recognition of the Albanian Church by the Roumanian Church. The Roumanian Patriarch gave an impressive reception in honor of Visarion and expressed his sympathies toward the Albanian Church, but the question of recognition was not mentioned. We sent out a statement denying that Visarion's visit to Roumania was in any way connected with the question of recognition of the Albanian Church, but the Greek newspapers did not publish our statement.

"Recently, the VREME of Belgrade, published a news item in its issue of July 4th stating that Albanian nationalists in Valona attacked Italian fascists and that two fascists and one Italian officer were killed. This story is without the slightest foundation. We have no Italian officers at Valona, excepting the organizer of the Youth Movement (Enti Kombëtar). We sent out a statement denying this story published in the Vreme, but our statement was never published.

"The Yugoslav press is continually attacking Albania, but whenever a newspaper in Albania publishes a mild and harmless article of criticism directed

directed against Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav Government lodges a protest with our Government. The Yugoslav Minister comes to me and demands to know why we permit such anti-Yugoslav articles to appear in our press, though the Yugoslav newspapers persist in spreading false information about Albania. The real trouble is that there is no central authority in Yugoslavia. I told the former Yugoslav Minister, Mastassievitch, that in my opinion his Government had no definite, fixed policy, and that every Governor in the provinces acted according to his own whims and often in violation of the wishes of the central Government. Mastassievitch understood the danger of the anti-Albanian campaign of falsification in the Yugoslav press, and he tried to stop such propaganda, but unfortunately his attitude was not that of his Government. The present Yugoslav Minister, M. Ojanoviteh, also understands it very well, and as he was himself a journalist, he wrote personal letters to various Yugoslav newspapers, requesting them to cease the newspaper campaign against Albania, and to publish the denials sent out by our Press Bureau. I am told that he received word that the attacks on us would be stopped and that our statements would be published whenever we wished to make corrections in the Yugoslav press with regard to Albanian news. However, there is no evidence that anything has actually been done in this matter in Belgrade. There are at least two governments

governments in Yugoslavia. The Minister of the Interior does not cooperate with the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

"When our parliamentary elections take place in the Fall, it will not surprise me in the least if the Yugoslav and Greek press will broadcast inventions to the effect that a revolution had broken out in Albania."

A moment after criticizing the lack of coordination in the Yugoslav Government between the Minister of the Interior and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Vrioni tried to give me the impression that he knew nothing about the death sentence recently imposed by the Albanian Political Court upon Said and Musaj Kryeziu, Albanian refugees in Yugoslavia, and denied any knowledge of the confiscation of the Italian newspapers which reached Albania and which contained news items about the decision of the Albanian Political Court. His attempts at an explanation were clumsy and ludicrous. Vrioni said:

"I have no knowledge of the Italian newspaper GAZZETTA DEL MEZZOGIORNO, of Bari, which is said to have been confiscated by the Albanian authorities. I don't know about it because the Press Bureau is not in my Department. It is connected with the Ministry of the Interior. I don't read the Bari newspaper, for it is a journal of secondary importance.

"I don't know about the sentence of the Kryeziu brothers by the Albanian Political Court. (The text of the Political Court's decision appeared in the Official

Official Gazette of June 23, 1938, No. 39, and a translation of it was given in my confidential despatch, No. 851, of July 14th, 1938).

"Ceni and Hasan Kryeziu have lost their national feelings. They have become tools of the Yugoslavs. They are mercenaries. I told the former Yugoslav Minister, Nastassievitch, on one occasion that these two Albanian refugees seemed to have more influence in their province than the Yugoslav Governor. While all the Albanians in Yugoslavia were suffering at the hands of the authorities, while their property was taken from them and they were being persecuted in various other ways, these two men, Ceni and Hasan Kryeziu, enjoyed great influence with the Yugoslav authorities. They are continuing their activities there against our country. They are spreading propaganda to the effect that our King is ill and dying, that our régime is weakening and that our Government is about to fall. And they have organized a small band of mercenaries, armed with the help of the Yugoslavs."

Referring to the Greco-Albanian relations, Mr. Vrioni said:

"Our differences with Greece are still unadjusted. We cannot accept the terms offered by the Greek Government in settlement of Albanian property confiscated by the Greek Government because the drachma has fallen in value, and the Greek Government bonds have de-

preciated

preciated by about seventy-five percent. The original offer was absurdly low, but if the Albanians were to accept it now and receive payment in Greek Government bonds at their present value, they would get practically nothing for their property.

"Premier Venizelos told our Minister in Athens recently that he will settle the Greco-Albanian differences shortly after the elections. He said to our Minister that even if he is defeated at the polls, he will use his influence to solve the pending problems between Albania and Greece. This is very strange. If Venizelos cannot use his influence to solve these problems when he is at the head of the Government, how will he be able to do it when he is defeated? It seems to me that Venizelos has already lost his grip on Greek affairs, and from all indications he will be defeated at the coming elections."

Commenting on President Hoover's proposal to the Disarmament Conference, Mr. Vrioni said:

"We look with favor upon President Hoover's proposal. We shall even favor a reduction in armaments by more than one third."

A few hours after I had this conversation with Minister for Foreign Affairs Vrioni, the afternoon newspaper HEMA contained a leading article about the Yugoslav press. The HEMA is published by a group of more conservative parliamentary deputies and the financed

financed by Abdurahman Kroni, the King's foster father. A translation of this characteristic article is submitted herewith, together with extracts from another article published in the NYHA on July 25, 1938, dealing with Greco-Albanian relations.

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Enclosures:
Article and
extracts from NYHA.

Copies to N.I.C., Rome,
Belgrade and Athens.

Enclosure No. 1 in Despatch No. 556

dated July 28, 1932 from the American Legation, Tirana, Albania.

(Translation)

From the Sesa of July 20, 1932.

We regret to reiterate again that the press of our neighbors, both north and south, because of a strange but unmistakable mentality, has never desired to maintain a just attitude toward our country or to be inspired by the spirit of neighborliness and loyalty. The reasons for this astonishing and harmful attitude are neither phenomenal nor incomprehensible: Extreme chauvinism and insatiable voluptuousness directed against the very cells of our national existence goad the neighboring press to attack. It does not know what it is doing.

How can it be explained otherwise? It seems as though the recent campaign of the Greek press against our country was not enough, and now the Yugoslav press, with its raucous voice, is acting as an accompaniment to the song of the Greek press by inventing the most unspeakable and loathsome things about Albania.

As a reward for our chivalrous attitude in closing our eyes to most shocking events in Yugoslavia we did not expect the praise of the neighboring press, but neither did we expect their customary cries of savage beasts.

What other meaning could this campaign of the Yugoslav press have? For a month it has been using all the force of its imagination to invent and disseminate false news about our country. What is the matter with the [illegible] of Belgrade and the [illegible] of Sarajevo that they are giving full speed to this satanic activity of ridiculous invention and fabrication?

In the most critical moments of the political life of the neighboring state, in the most fearful hours of a period when plots to overthrow the government are revealed in Yugoslavia (such as that of Maribor), when officers are executed by the firing squad, and the country is quaking, what is the reason that the Yugoslav newspapers, in their slav spirit and in old outmoded tactics, are serving falsehoods to the world by saying that in our happy and peaceful Albania "bloody engagements are occurring (!) between the peasants and our Italian friends and that near Valona two Italian civilians and an officer have been killed ?

We do not understand this, or if we do understand, we cannot see how it will bring any results of moral or material usefulness to Yugoslavia. There is a long line of such experiments that have miscarried, and the Yugoslav press should have been convinced by now that such campaigns will never contribute to strengthen friendly relations and will not help to obliterate the consequences of the mistaken and violent policy of the past.

Then

Then why this absurdity? Is it to increase the numbers of the adversaries? Could such an increase realize the political ends of Yugoslavia? We do not think so. Then the failure of this renewed method is evident.

If this campaign of fabrications by the Yugoslav press is made for the purpose of diverting the attention of people in revolt and nervousness, this method is doomed to early failure. The daily turbulent events in the Yugoslav state cannot be concealed by these falsehoods; their effect, therefore, will be felt more than before.

If the campaign is not for the purpose of throwing dust in the eyes of its people but is made to snort out their unlimited hatred against Italy, they are not attaining their end, because the people know and understand that Italy, with its policy of sincere economic, financial and cultural co-operation, is only helping them make their land stronger, happier, more flourishing and more progressive. This noble and generous help by our ally is worthy of the eternal gratitude of our nation and not of the imaginary conflicts and accusations.

Then why this campaign which could be in anger and discontent on the part of our people?

We do not know....let others understand it.

- - - - -

dated July 28, 1932 from the American Legation, Tirana, Albania

Paragraphs from an editorial in the [illegible] of July 23, 1932, directed against Greece:

"Several days ago we published a sorrowful appeal from our brothers in Greece who are at the height of their sufferings and despair. They described once more their lamentable condition and asked for help to save them from the scythe of death which has been placed at their throats by the Greek government. Without the slightest mercy or hesitation, and in violation of any international engagements, the Greek government is resolved to exterminate them and is carrying out this resolution.

.....

"The Greek government, for reasons connected with its internal policy, has expropriated all the property of Albanians in Greece. We have never made any observation regarding this decision which is a right of its integral and undisputable sovereignty— but expropriation does not mean robbery. Then why has the Greek government made the two synonymous? If it were its principle and tradition to seize and rob the properties of our brothers, why did it keep them in suspense for the last 19 years? Why did it not make a statement from the beginning that their property belonged to Greece as the conquering power? Why did the Greeks make promises before Albanian delegations and before the League of Nations that they would honor the legitimate rights of Albanians in Greece? We fail to comprehend this mystery. Only Greek mentality can understand it."

The editorial then refers to the modification of article 69 of the Greek agrarian law which brings the price paid for expropriated land to 60 centimes gold (approximately $0.12) for each 1000 square meters, and to the fact that the Greek government is trying to compel the Albanian owners to accept, in payment, [illegible] which have dropped [illegible].

Then the article proceeds as follows:

"We know that all nationals of other countries were well paid. Not only nationals of big nations but also of the neighboring countries were favored: To a Yugoslav national, Vasil Chayayt, who had property in the same regions as the Albanians, the Greek government, upon representations by the Yugoslav government, returned all his expropriated property, retaining only 900 dulums for which the real value was paid.

"Our opinion is that the Albanian owners should refuse to receive payment in bonds. It would be suicide and a

great

great disgrace to our national dignity if they accepted. Better nothing than accept a miserable sum which would only legalize this Greek robbery.

"We should not be discouraged by this irony of fate, for there are many things that we could apply against Greece in retaliation. We shall make use of all these things because our national honor and manly attitude demand it.".....

- - - - -

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 567. Tirana, August 11, 1932.

Confidential.

AUG 24 32

SUBJECT: The New Greek Minister to Albania.

768.75/37

Copy to MID

AUG 27 1932

768.75
701.6875
368.7551

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AUG 25 1932
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Sir:

I have the honor to report that the new Greek Minister, Kimon Diamandopoulos, arrived in Tirana a few days ago and called on Foreign Minister Vrioni, who informed him that the King will not receive him in audience before his return to Tirana in September.

Mr. Diamandopoulos called at the Legation and talked about his hopes to adjust the differences existing between his country and Albania.

He said:

"There are two or three questions to be solved. I do not like to speak of them as problems, for the

questions

questions are really not difficult at all. Three years ago our Government was ready to pay the Albanians for their property confiscated in Greece. The Government then was prepared to pay in drachmas, which were of much higher value at that time. Then, for some reason, the Albanian Government delayed the settlement, by changing its demands. Thus a year and a half elapsed. When we arrived at another decision and finally agreed to pay the Albanian Government in Greek Government bonds, the Albanians waited again. In the meantime the drachma has fallen, and the Greek Government bonds have depreciated considerably. I suppose the Albanian Government will now try to delay again the settlement of this question, in the hope that time would work in their favor. I shall endeavor to convince the Albanian officials, especially the King, that such a view of the matter would be childish, for the Greek Government bonds will hardly rise in value. Besides, if the Greek Government had any money to spare, it would not be justified in giving it to the Albanians,- it would rather return it to our creditors who came to our rescue in the hour of our greatest need."

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Herman Bernstein.

Copies to Athens and Rome.

HB/sjs
701/CR-710

4 carbon copies
Received F.P.
1 copy in D.C.R.-L.E.O.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

768.75/38

SEE 875.4016 Greeks/8 FOR #2312

FROM Greece (Morris) DATED Nov. 29,1932

TO NAME

1—1127 G.P.O.

REGARDING: Greek-Albanian relations.
Press comment by PROIA and POLITEA concerning the general --.

lec

No. 2312 Athens, December 29, 1932.

Subject: Greco-Albanian relations.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

The newspapers "PROIA" and "POLITEA" have recently given attention to the old complaint against Albania for not allowing the free functioning of Greek schools in that country. "PROIA" points out that English, French, Italian, Rumanian and other foreign schools are allowed in Albania, whereas the functioning of Greek primary schools is not permitted in Northern Epirus which has, according to "PROIA," "an exclusive Greek mentality and language." "PROIA" says that the Hellenic Government should no longer tolerate this state of affairs. "Albania," it says, "has entered into an international treaty bearing her signature which grants to the Greek minority population of Northern Epirus definite rights which are being denied and which constitute an open violation of treaty rights." "The Greek Government," continues "PROIA," "must make Albania understand that such provocations can no longer be tolerated.

"POLITEA" says that Albania has every reason to be in good relationship with Greece to which she is united not only

by

by a common frontier but by very definite common interests. "POLITEA" summarizes the treatment of the Greek population of Northern Epirus as openly and intentionally hostile despite all the protestations of official friendship exchanged between the two countries. "POLITEA" alleges that not only are the Greek schools closed but the teaching of the Greek language, even in the home, is forbidden. "POLITEA" also calls upon the government to take active measures to put an end to this situation.

Respectfully yours,

(Signed)

Leland B. Morris,

American Chargé d'Affaires a. i.

Legation File No. 710

Copy to E. I. C.

LBM/cwf

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

768.75/39

SEE 775.00/12 FOR #616

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED Dec.2, 1932

TO NAME

1—1127 O.R.O.

REGARDING:

Confiscated Albanian property in Greece.

Conversations with the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs concerning -.

39

Wi

why the foreign press is so hostile to Albania."

With regard to Greco-Albanian relations and the proposed solution of the problem regarding the confiscated property of Albanians in Greece, the Prime Minister remarked:

"The new Greek Government has expressed a genuine willingness to solve this problem now. When the Greeks had money to pay for the confiscated property they lacked the good will to do it. Now that they have no money, they have the good will. But we shall send a commission to Greece shortly for the purpose of endeavoring to adjust the matter."

Foreign Minister Vrioni said:

"The only important question between Albania and Greece is the one relating to the confiscated Albanian property in Greece. Like the Venizelos Government, the new...

new Hellenic Government has expressed a desire for a definite adjustment of the matter. We are therefore planning to send a commission to Greece to make a further study of how best to solve the problem.

"The matter is further complicated now by the drop in the value of the drachma. The original appraisal of our property in Greece was extremely low, but we are not raising this question any more. But at that time the drachma was worth about three hundred to the Napoleon (approximately Four Dollars). Now the value of the drachma has fallen to 700 or 800 to the Napoleon. All we will ask is that the property be paid for at the rate of the drachma at the time the land was appraised. According to my information the drachma will continue to sink. The bonds with which the Greek Government has offered to pay the Albanians for the confiscated property have declined in value about Thirty percent. Besides, if the Albanians wanted to sell these bonds now they would receive practically nothing for their property.

"We also had a difference with Greece with regard to the matter of extradition. It was a question of interpretation. But that has now been settled in a recent exchange of notes.

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A-C/C

No. 623. Tirana, December 16, 1932.

Confidential.

SUBJECT: Appointment of Albanian Commission for the purpose of Adjusting Greco-Albanian Differences.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
A-C/O
JAN 9 1933
M
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

JAN 11 1933

AM RECD

DEPT. OF STATE
DIV. COM. & REC.

FOR DISTRIBUTION - CHECK Yes No
To the Field ✓
In U. S. A. ✓

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Copy to MID

768.75/40

768.75

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DEC 30 1932
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Sir:

775.00/12

Referring to my despatch No. 616 of December 2, 1932, I have the honor to report that a commission, composed of Mehmed Konitza, Dr. Dimitri Beratti, Secretary-General of the Foreign Office, and Siri Leckoviku, the Prefect of Scutari, was appointed for the purpose of negotiating in Athens an adjustment of the pending Greco-Albanian differences. Mehmed Konitza informs me that he has not yet accepted the chairmanship of the Commission for the reason that he is unwilling to be the leader of a "lost cause". He says that the financial situation of Greece is so

JAN 19 1933
FILED

critical...

critical at present that it would be impossible to conclude an arrangement satisfactory to the Albanians whose property was confiscated in Greece. He believes that any settlement he would accept, however favorable, would be subjected to criticism in Albania.

Hussein Vrioni, Minister of Foreign Affairs, commenting on the Government's decision to appoint the Commission, said:

"Upon the repeated requests of the Greek Foreign Minister, we are now sending a commission to Greece to negotiate the settlement of the question of the confiscated Albanian property in that country. This commission will make a further study of the question there, and while the commission is still in Athens we may empower it to conclude arrangements, after its proposal will have been approved by us.

"This is the only serious question to be adjusted. We are not greatly concerned about the question regarding minority schools. We have established minority schools in Albania in which Greek is taught. The Greeks have failed to open a single minority school in Greece in which Albanian is taught. The Greek Minister tells me that his Government does not object in principle to minority schools for Albanians, but if they established Albanian schools, they would have to open schools for other minorities as well, and this they could not do for various important political reasons. If Greece continues much longer to persist in this viewpoint, we shall be obliged to close the Greek minority schools in

Albania...

Albania. We honor the obligations we assumed before the League of Nations, but we expect that Greece shall also fulfil her obligations toward us.

"As for the question of the Church, the Greek Government has nothing to do with that. We are negotiating with the Oecumentical Patriarch in Istanbul regarding the recognition of our Orthodox Church. It seems to me it would be to the advantage of the Patriarchate if the Patriarch recognized all Orthodox Churches in independent countries. Five or six years ago, when I was Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Patriarch sent a representative here, Mgr. Chrysanthos, to negotiate the matter of recognition. An accord satisfactory to both parties was reached in principle, but when the prelate presented the matter to the Patriarch for ratification, the Patriarch sent us a counter-proposal which was entirely unacceptable. His proposal aimed at the creation of a state within the state. It provided that if a priest committed a crime and then took shelter in a church, our gendarmes should have no right to enter the church for the purpose of seizing him before receiving authorization from the local metropolitan. If then the priest were placed on trial, the Court should have no right to administer his oath. His oath would have to be administered before the Metropolitan who would then notify the court in writing to that effect. The Patriarch proposed also that in the event of a disagreement in the Synod, he should be the arbiter. The Patriarch would send a representative to arbitrate the question in

dispute...

dispute. Of course, we could not accept any such proposals. I believe the Patriarch is now inclined to recognize the Albanian Orthodox Church. He kept delaying the matter of recognition for some time, expecting that the Albanian State would break down and that he could then resume his hold on the Church. Now he has become convinced that his expectations in that direction cannot be realized."

The Greek Minister, M. Diamandopoulos, referring to the minority schools for Albanians in Greece, admitted that no such schools had been established there, and said confidentially that Greece would have no objection to opening two or three schools for Albanians in Greece, but his Government was powerless to do this in view of a secret understanding with Yugoslavia regarding minority schools.

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Herman Bernstein.

Copies to Rome and Athens.

4

HB/sjs
710.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

768.75/41

SEE 665.7531/13 FOR despatch #633

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED Jan.3,1933

TO NAME 1—1127 o.f.o.

REGARDING:

Conversation with King Zog.
He stated that relations with Greece remain unchanged. Recently Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs asked through Minister in Athens to send commission to conclude arrangement regarding confiscated properties of Albanians in Greece.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

768.75/42

SEE 875.001 Zog/81 FOR #786

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED June 18, 1933

TO NAME

1—1127 ore

REGARDING:

Statement of Mehmed Konitza that relations between Yugoslavia and Greece and Albania are now good.

Wi

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

768.75 /43

SEE 775.00/19 FOR #893

FROM Albania (Huston) DATED Oct.12, 1933

TO NAME

1—1127 O.F.O.

REGARDING: Statement of the Greek Minister concerning friendly relations between Albania and Greece.

Wi

No. 895. Tirana, October 12, 1933.

Confidential.

SUBJECT: Isolated Albania.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to state that there is abroad in Tirana these days a growing sense of Albanian isolation. In all the recent rush of Balkan love-fests——— the Greco-Turk accord, the meeting at Sinaia, the tour of King Alexander, the busy scurryings from capital to capital of Prime and Foreign Ministers——— Albania is practically never mentioned, even in the most verbose press reports. She is cut off from the Little Entente because it is leagued with France, and France frowns upon any advances being made to Albania because of her own new courtship with Italy.

The

The Greek Minister, Mr. Diamandopoulos, raised this question with me today, speaking as follows: "Some Albanians------ not members of the Cabinet, but responsible people------ complained to me yesterday that Albania seemed to be 'left out' of all these new Balkan moves toward a rapprochement. I replied that, first of all, Greece is certainly the least deserving of all countries of a reproach of that sort; we have recently completed a commercial accord with Albania, the old question of the confiscated property of Albanians in Greece has now been settled, and we have been friendly in all respects. I told them that, in the second place, it can not be considered surprising if the other countries of the Balkans do not attempt to draw Albania to them when she is already linked with Italy. Albania is naturally considered apart from other Balkan countries because of her special relations with Italy. Italy would be annoyed if she were to find Albania leaning toward too close Balkan ties or if the other Balkan states were to beckon too urgently to Albania; the first move in either case would appropriately be notification to and agreement of Italy.

"Some time ago, when there was talk of an Adriatic pact between Italy and Yugoslavia, Djafer Villa expressed to me much the same feeling of loneliness. He asked me what would be the attitude of Greece, as an Adriatic state, with regard to such a pact. When I posed the question to my Government, the reply was that Greece did not consider herself to be an Adriatic state."

The recently returned Czechoslovakian Chargé d'Affaires,

Mr.

Mr. Vokac, expressed the same idea to me in even stronger terms: "Albania is now entirely isolated——— isolated from the other Balkan states, from the Little Entente, and from Italy. Mussolini is very angry with King Zog. Did you notice that Victor Emmanuel sent Zog a message of congratulations on his birthday, but that there was none from Mussolini? That is very significant. While the Pact of Tirana was in vigor Mussolini was constantly sending friendly messages to Zog, but there have been none since Zog refused to renew the Pact. Mussolini is very angry. And I can tell you, entirely confidentially, that when I was in Prague recently I was assured directly by Dr. Benes that the question of the Little Entente extending financial aid to Albania or becoming entangled with her politically is ruled out. That is authentic and definite. Commercial accords, perhaps yes; but financial or political ties, definitely no. Czechoslovakia alone can not help Albania, nor can Yugoslavia; the Little Entente can not because it is bound to France; and France does not wish to embroil herself with Italy."

The Yugoslav Minister, Mr. Djonovitch, who returned to Tirana a few days ago and had an audience with the King this morning, appears now to feel that Albania has little hope of securing financial aid from outside, either from Italy or the Little Entente or the League of Nations, and must look to the development of her own economic resources and the building up of a more favorable trade balance to bring her out of the present financial morass. His optimism regarding financial aid from his own Government

or

or the Little Entente seems to have disappeared. "Naturally Albania is isolated", he said in conversation with me this evening. "We cannot make a move in her behalf without Italy's flaring up. Yugoslavia can not bring money to Albania or enter into a political entente. I said to the King today, 'Let us not try the difficult and dangerous things first; let us begin with the more easy. We can negotiate a commercial treaty and assist Albania in that way.' Albania is facing a period of loneliness, economic struggle and poverty, but if thus she can win actual independence and economic prosperity it is the very best thing that could happen to her."

The statements made by both Mr. Ljotovitch and Mr. Vokac, who have just returned from their respective capitals, seem to sound the death knell to any hopes that King Zog may have entertained as to the possibility of securing any aid from the Little Entente or from Yugoslavia other than, of course, through the negotiation of advantageous commercial treaties.

Respectfully yours,

Cloyce K. Huston
Chargé d'Affaires, a.i.

CKH/LJS
710

A true copy of the signed original

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 875.00/385 FOR #12

FROM Albania (Wheeler) DATED Dec. 16, 1933

TO NAME 1—1127 GPO

REGARDING: Greek-Albanian relations.
Translation of a statement from BESA with reference to an Athens press comment on the assassination of Cena Kryeziu in 1927 which was derogatory to King Zog.

768.75/44

lec

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

768.75/45

SEE 875.4016 Greeks/11 FOR #57

FROM Albania (Wheeler) DATED Feb.27, 1934

TO NAME 1—1127 GPO

REGARDING:

Greek minority in Albania and Albanian minority in Greece.

Number of -. Differences between the two countries due to the minority question. Alleged persecutions of the Greek Church in Albania.

Wi

No. 57 Tirana, February 27, 1934.

Confidential.

SUBJECT: Greek Minority in Albania.

875.4016 - Greek/11

768.75
~~868.2016 Albanians~~
~~875.404~~

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor, in this despatch, to refer to recent debates in the Greek Chamber of Deputies on alleged harsh treatment of the Greek Minority in Albania, reported to the Department by the Minister at Athens in his despatch No. 115 of January 9, 1934.

In the past these charges in the Greek Parliament have had a certain periodicity and this Government has come to consider them as largely inspired by politics. Moreover their inaccuracies and the intemperance of their presentation have not disposed the authorities here to consider them with great seriousness.

It

It may be said, in the first place, that Greek Minority figures are not above question: ten years ago, (according to Emil Ludwig) when the question was hectic, when the Serbian authorities found 2,000,000 Serbs in Macedonia, and the Bulgarians themselves admitted 700, Greece could not find a single Serb in that territory. The Greek Minority in Albania, which the Greek claims put at 100,000, is probably less than half that number. The last Albanian census (1930) shows approximately 40,000. These are practically all in the Prefecture of Gjinokaster (Argyrocastro). For the most part they do not speak the Albanian language and think of themselves as Greeks. But they have full rights as Albanian citizens and are adequately represented in the Parliament at Tirana.

Albanian estimates give the Albanian Minority in Greece as over 200,000. These are widely scattered. Great numbers of them have occupied Greek soil for centuries -- as in the Albanian Island- and village-settlements about Athens, some of which were ancient before the Turkish invasion of Albania in the fifteenth century, and which are comparable to the ancient Albanian settlements on the Italian peninsula. They have played an intimate part in Greek history and have furnished Greece with Generals, Admirals and even Premiers. But, although with that racial tenacity that is characteristic of the Albanian stock they have clung to the language and speak Albanian among themselves and in their homes, there is no legitimate argument by which they can be claimed for a Minority in the sense in which the word is here employed. For all

practical

practical purposes they are as Greek as the Greeks themselves.

There is however, adjoining the frontier, a population, which I estimate at approximately 40,000, which constitutes the true Albanian Minority. The Greek claim that they number no more than 10,000, is, I think, fallacious. It appears to arise from the fact that this number embraces only the Moslem Albanians, and all Orthodox are arbitrarily counted as Greeks.

I believe that the two Minorities -- the Greek Minority in Albania and the Albanian Minority in Greece -- do not differ greatly in size, and that 40,000 is a fair estimate for each.

As to their comparative treatment difference of opinion may be expected to exist between the two Governments. It appears difficult to deny, however, that the Albanian Minority in Greece has in the past suffered considerably from repressive measures. And the political side of the anti-Albanian agitation in Northern Epirus, which is a residuum from the old autonomous movement there, must be taken into account in weighing the Greek charges.

The resolution, requesting the intervention of the Hellenic Government in the matter of the alleged mistreatment of the Greek Minority in Albania, which precipitated the discussion in the Greek Parliament reported in the despatch referred to from the Legation at Athens, was the outcome of a meeting of Northern Epirotes resident in the Capital. Northern Epirote, in the Greek sense, means that portion of Epirus which is now Albanian territory. It

is

is the claim of Albanians resident therein that comparatively few of those who style themselves Northern Epirotes are in fact natives of that region, but that the greater number have come there from Greek Epirus, for the most part from the country about Janina. Botsaris, who took a part in the anti-Albanian debate in the Chamber of Deputies is a member from that city. He was a leader in the Autonomous movement in Epirus after the Balkan War. The Northern Epirus Association, organised some years ago by the faction he represents, went to such lengths in its attacks on Albania that Venizelos thought it advisable to dissolve it. Its leaders, however — the Albanian Government consider for reasons political — have not ceased their agitation, which during the past year has been centred in the question of the Minority schools.

The closing of the Greek schools in Albania is an unavoidable part of the operation of the new Albanian school-law, which has closed all foreign schools, with the single exception of the American Kavaja School, whose contract makes its closure illegal. This fact, apparently, was not brought out in the debate in the Greek Parliament. It is true that the Greek schools in Albania exist no longer. Neither, for example, do the Italian schools.

In the audience given by the King in December last to the Greek Minister in Tirana (referred to by Mr. MacVeagh's despatch) the Minister was instructed to inform the King that his Government would agree to the establishment of schools, primarily for the Albanian Minority, in northern Greece, <u>but only on condition that there be in Albanian a return to the status quo of three years ago.</u>

.

My Greek colleague himself made this statement to me, confidentially, on the day of the audience. In the light of the new school law such a return to the old regime was an impossibility. It could have been made possible only by repealing the measure. The King's answer, which he quoted to me, bore no similarity to the reply as stated to Mr. MacVeagh by Mr. Maximos, the Greek Minister for Foreign Affairs.

As a matter of fact the number of schools in the Prefecture of Gjinokaster where Greek is taught has been increased to 25, and it is the intention to add five more to this category. The teaching-language in these schools, as in all other parts of the country, is Albanian, but Greek is taught in them as a language-lesson. The teachers, whether they teach Greek alone or in connection with other branches, are appointed and paid by this Government. It can scarcely be counted unreasonable that a Government should desire that its citizens, regardless of race, should speak and read the tongue of the country.

The speech of Mr. Melas (also a deputy from Jannina) in the debate, with reference to alleged persecutions of the Greek Church in Albania, is particularly intemperate and misleading. Services of the Albanian Autocephalus Orthodox Church are held in Greek in the Greek communities, but the clergy are necessarilly under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Gjinokaster, and the Metropolitan is Albanian.

The Greek Church in Albania was a legacy from the Turkish rule. So long as Albania remained a Turkish Province, it could not sever relations with the Oecumenical Patriarchate, for the reason that the latter had the support of the Sultan-

ate,

Sultanate, and all efforts met with failure. The desire to sever the bond grew from a conviction that the Patriarchate at Constantinople, while it was spiritual head of all Orthodox peoples within the Turkish Empire, was also the nest of Greek politics and propaganda. It was not to be expected that the independent Albania, whose greatest need was the casting off of the mental, social and moral shackles of Turkey, would retain the Greek Church organization any longer than it deemed necessary. The Greeks themselves have broken away from the Patriarchate of Constantinople, although that Patriarchate is Greek. In proclaiming the independence of their country's Church, they would seem to have championed the very principle, (an independent Church in an independent country) which they protest against in the Albanians.

I think, moreover, that this Government should be credited with carrying out its program of separation in a manner calculated to heal the breach in as little time as might be. After proclaiming the Church's independence (in 1922) it made an earnest effort to reach an understanding with the Patriarchate by which that independence should be admitted while the spiritual union remained. It brought to Albania Greek Bishops of Albanian extraction with intent to place them at the head of the new Church once its independence was acknowledged. The Patriarchate, however, refused the overtures, and the Bishops consented to cooperate only on terms which the Albanian Government considered inadmissible. I touch on this matter here for the reason that the formation of the Autocephalus Church is continually brought forward by the anti-Albanian party in Greece (as one would cite the

unmentionable

unmentionable crime which puts the doer beyond the pale of honor and righteousness) to bolster its intransigent attitude on the Minority question.

It needs only to be added that the incidents alluded to in the debate by deputy Melas did not occur as related. Archbishop Vissarion was among those Albanians who left Greece as a result of alleged persecution. It may be the fact, but I have never before heard it alleged that definite accusations, whether of immorality or other offences, were laid against him. Whatever his character (and there do not lack Albanians who disapprove him) it is difficult to see what other prelate in the country possesses his peculiar qualities of organization or could take his place. The incident of 1931, is wrongly ascribed to "a Turkish teacher" (by which is meant a Moslem). The interrupter of the service was of the Orthodox Church. Mr. Melas' "Archpriest Kleftheriou" was an ordinary priest of the name. He was not "assassinated for having refused to officiate in Albanian". The assassin, who confessed at his trial, was a Moslem and his act was a common murder -- the outcome of an altercation between the two men growing out of the murderer's would-be relations with the dead man's daughter. Nor was the murderer acquitted: he was condemned to death and is still under sentence, pending appeal to the Court of Cassation.

Respectfully yours,

Lost Wheeler

Copy to Athens.

PW/sjs
840.1/Cr 840.4/710.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 875.4016 Greeks/16 FOR #209

FROM Albania (Huston) DATED Nov.2, 1934

TO NAME 1—1127 o.r.o

763.75/46

REGARDING:

Greek minority in Albania.

Greek indignation over treatment of - appears to be increasing. Anti-Albanian demonstration in Athens which led to an Anti-Greek demonstration at Argirocastro during which the windows of the Greek Consulate were broken.

Wi

No. 209 Tirana, November 2, 1934.

Confidential.

SUBJECT: The Greek Minority in Albania.

868.4016-Greeks/16

768.75

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

Referring to despatches No. 104 and 197 of May 10 and October 17, 1934, on the above subject, I have the honor to report that Greek indignation over the treatment accorded the Greek minority in Albania, with particular regard to the minority schools, appears to be mounting.

In response to an anti-Albanian demonstration recently held in Athens and probably as a gesture to influence the League of Nations' consideration of the protest recently submitted by the minority element, an anti-Greek demonstration was staged at Argirocastro on October

October 24th last. On that occasion stones were thrown through the windows of the Greek Consulate in that city, for which act the Greek Minister, Mr. Diamantopoulos, made the usual representations to the Albanian Government. It is understood that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Djafer Villa, at first stated that reports coming to him from Argirocastro regarding the manifestation contained no mention of such an incident, but I am now informed by the Secretary of the Greek Legation that the Foreign Minister has, presumably after receiving more complete reports regarding the demonstration, tendered the apologies of the Albanian Government for the unfortunate occurrence.

Respectfully yours,

Cloyce K. Huston
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

Copy to Athens

CKH/sjs
710

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

768.75/47

SEE 875.4016 Greeks/19 FOR #223

FROM Albania (Huston) DATED Nov.30, 1934

TO NAME

1—1127 GPO

REGARDING: Greek minority schools in Albania.

Lessening of agitation due to teaching in the Greek language and appointment of additional teachers. Report that the Belgian Minister is endeavoring to bring about a direct settlement between the two countries.

Wi

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

763.75/48

SEE 875.4016 Greeks/21 FOR #478

FROM Greece (Aldridge) DATED Dec.4, 1934

TO NAME

1—1127 ors

REGARDING:

Greek minority schools in Albania.

Greek reaction to reported closing of -. Possible discussion of the matter by the League of Nations. Report that Albania is arming her border with irresponsible elements.

Wi

No. 478 Athens, December 4, 1934.

Subject: Greco-Albanian Situation.

875.4016 - Greeks / 21

768.75

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the recent ebullition in the Greek Press and in Greek public opinion of hostility toward Albania as a result of the alleged action of the Albanian authorities in closing Greek Minority schools and taking other repressive steps designed to deprive the Greek Minority of its cherished educational and cultural rights. The conflict between the Albanians and the Grecophile population of Southern Albania, or as the Greeks prefer to say - Northern Epirus, is an old story and the present outburst of feeling is obviously a revival of the fundamental

issue

issue inherent in the Minority situation in this section of the Balkans.

It may be stated, however, that the present reopening of the wound has been attended by a display of passion which is considerably more intense than that ordinarily displayed on such occasions in the past. The Greek Press of all shades of political opinion has hurled accusations of the most violent nature against the Albanian people and against the Albanian Government itself and has succeeded in working public opinion in this country up to a high pitch of excitement. Blanket denial on the part of the Albanian Press of all accusations and Albanian counter-charges that forces are at work in Greece intended to undermine Albania's prestige and good name in the family of nations have only served to fan the flames in Greece still further. The Greek Press states with positive conviction and with names and details supplied, that the Albanians are deporting various members of the Greek Minority bound with chains like common criminals, that Greek school children are being incited by the Albanian authorities to disobey their parents, that bastinado methods are being employed to force members of Greek Minorities to express publicly their perfect satisfaction with the treatment accorded them, and that, all things considered, a virtual reign of terror exists. Under the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the Greek Press should resort to such strong phrases as "intolerable persecution," "barbarism," "extermination of Hellenism," and "systematic affront to the dignity of

<u>the</u>

"the Greek people," or that the less responsible organs should speak quite openly of military reprisals.

The Greek Foreign Minister, Mr. Maximos, has stated that Greece will leave no stone unturned to protect the dignity of the country and to obtain full recognition of the rights of her Minority population in Albania but, he asserts, no illegal action on the part of the injured Greek elements will be permitted; the attitude of Greece will be as correct as it is firm.

The Opposition has, of course, lost no opportunity to point the finger of scorn and rebuke toward the Government in power by reason of its weak and ineffective attitude. However, it must be recognized that the entire Greek Press of all complexions is united in bitter hostility toward Albania, the Government Press merely refraining from direct criticism and abuse of those in power.

Now that the question has been brought, according to the Press, to the attention of the "Committee of Three" of the League of Nations, which occupies itself with Minority matters, there seems for the moment to be a slight relaxation of the tension in Greece. The Greek Press in fact has stressed the point that the reported decision of the "Committee of Three" to refer the question to the Council of the League is one of the rare cases, if not the only case, in which a Minority question, having been examined by the competent committee, has been actually laid before the Council for action.

According to the Press, the steps reported above have resulted from measures taken by the aggrieved Minority elements themselves and while it has been stated also in the Press that Mr. Maximos would himself take official action before the League, I have been unable to learn that this has yet been done. In any event, the opinion prevails here that the entire question of Albania's treatment of her Greek Minority will shortly be placed on the agenda of the League - if not during the present session, certainly during the following session.

Although the somewhat calming effect of these reports is encouraging, it is not without importance to observe that rumors continue to circulate to the effect that Albania is arming her border with irresponsible elements which the Greek Press does not hesitate to term "brigands." The Albanians likewise believe that Macedonian elements, on the border are looking for trouble and accuse the Greek Government of direct implication in this situation. The Albanian Minister in Athens on two occasions has told Mr. MacVeagh with much feeling that the Greek Government was sending military airplanes from Jannina to circle over Albanian territory in an effort to intimidate and bully the Albanian people by this shameful demonstration of military superiority.

While it is to be presumed and hoped that the flames which have been fanned over this Minority question will eventually die down and remain again as mere embers of possible trouble, a serious though passing threat to peace

exists

exists in the virtual certainty that any border raid or violence which may occur at this time will be considered by the injured party as officially inspired and provoked by the other Government - and this no matter how irresponsible the trouble makers may really be.

The entire question is little more than a "tempest in a teapot," but the elements of danger are none the less real because of the comparative unimportance (from the point of view of major European polities) of the issue at stake.

Respectfully yours,

Clayson W. Aldridge
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim.

Copy to American Legation at Tirana.

Legation File No.800

CWA:ewf

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 875.4016 Greeks/20 FOR #490

FROM Greece (Aldridge) DATED Dec 14, 1934.

TO NAME

1—1137 GPO

768.751/49

REGARDING:

Greco-Albanian relations have quieted down due to the fact that the League of Nations is to settle the question of the Greek minority in Albania.

b

768.91

No. 490 Athens, December 14, 1934.

Subject: Greco-Albanian Relations.

768.75

875.4016-Greek/Id

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my despatch No. 478 of December 4, 1934, regarding the recent rift in Greco-Albanian relations over the question of the Greek Minority, and particularly the Minority Schools in Southern Albania, and to state that while the Greek press asserts from time to time that the Albanians continue their oppressive acts against the Greek inhabitants of this region, the general atmosphere has for the time being cleared considerably.

Greek

Greek public opinion has found much comfort in press reports to the effect that the League of Nations will shortly take this entire question under its consideration. The most recent report states that the question of Greek Minority Schools in Northern Epirus is written on the order of the day for the short session of the League which till take place in January. The relaxation of the tension which has accompanied this information has undoubtedly been due also in part to the fact that recent developments in Turkey have made it necessary for the Greek press to divert its journalistic venom from Albania to its neighbor across the Aegean. The developments to which I refer are those which have attended a recent Turkish law prohibiting the wearing of ecclesiastical costumes in Turkey on the part of all religious sects, including of course the numerous Greek Orthodox priests in Istanbul. The Legation is reporting on this subject to the Department in a separate despatch.

It may interest the Department, in connection with the recent Greco-Albanian rift, to note a press statement made by Mr. Veniselos at the time when Greek public indignation was at its height. Mr. Veniselos stated that Greece, having signed the Kellogg Pact rejecting war as an instrument of national policy, would certainly not consider using its military superiority to overpower Albania. Greece was absolutely certain that the League of Nations would do its duty. He then proceeded to assert, almost in the same breath, that if by any impossible chance the Geneva institu-

tion

institution should not assure Greece its rights, the country would without hesitation go so far as to withdraw from the League, to denounce every treaty which might become an obstacle to such a withdrawal, and to have recourse, if necessary, to force in order to reestablish the violated rights of its co-nationals in Northern Epirus. If Mr. Veniselos has been correctly quoted by the press, and there appears to have been no denial of the words attributed to him, his recent remarks would appear to constitute another indication that the hand of this veteran statement is losing its political cunning. His political opponent, Mr. Tsaldaris, when questioned with respect to the foregoing remark by Mr. Veniselos, played his cards wisely in limiting himself to the following statement: "For the present, Greece has no reason to be discontented with the League of Nations."

Respectfully yours,

Clayson W. Aldridge,
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim.

Legation File No. 840.1

CWA/cwf

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

768.75/50

SEE 875.00/406 FOR #14193

FROM Military Attache (NAME) DATED Dec.27, 1934

TO Italy

1—1127 GPO

REGARDING: Greek-Albanian minorities question.

Reports emanating from Greece concerning a revolt in Albania are probably for purpose of bringing about a change of government due to -.

Wi

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

768.75 /51

SEE 875.4016 Greeks/41 FOR #361

FROM Albania (Huston) DATED July 24, 1935

TO NAME 1—1127 OPO

REGARDING: Greek minority schools in Albania.

Foreign Minister Villa has advised the Greek Minister that Albania will do everything possible to adjust the situation as concerns -, provided Greece agrees to provide schools for certain Albanian communities in northern Greece. Belief of the British Minister that Albania will made an honest effort to fulfill its promise to place the Greek schools on a satisfactory basis.

Wi

No. 361 Tirana, July 24, 1935.

Confidential.

SUBJECT: Greek Minority Schools in Albania.

875.4016 - Greek 2/41

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

768.75
~~868.4016~~ albanians

Sir:

I have the honor to report that in speaking to me on the above subject today the Greek Minister, Mr. Diamandopoulos, said that he had recently asked the Albanian Government what it had done, or proposed to do between now and next September, in the way of formulating a programme that would fulfil its promise, made at Geneva last May, to "adopt provisions corresponding to" the terms of the recent World Court advisory opinion. Foreign Minister Villa, says Mr. Diamandopoulos, countered by saying that Albania would do everything possible to adjust

the

the situation as regards Albanian schools, provided Greece agreed to provide schools for certain Albanian communities in northern Greece (Chamuria).

Somewhat taken aback by the Albanian proviso Mr. Diamandopoulos, after taking telegraphic advice from his government, informed Mr. Villa that the Greek Government could not accept the viewpoint that the two questions, i.e., the Greek minority schools in Albania and the Albanian minority schools in Greece, should be in any way linked together, especially since they were separately presented at Geneva. Mr. Villa then said that although no positive steps had yet actually been taken the question was being carefully studied by the Albanian Government. Mr. Diamandopoulos told me in conclusion that now it was merely a question of waiting to see whether or not the Albanian Government would take satisfactory measures before next September or October, adding that if this problem were happily solved the Greek Government might be prepared to entertain proposals for Albanian minority schools in certain communities in Greece.

Sir Robert Hodgson told me just prior to going on leave that he had gained the impression that Albania would make an honest effort to fulfil its promise to place the Greek minority schools on a satisfactory basis. He understood that the Foreign Minister had originally been charged with working out the new programme, but that it was later shifted to Minister of Education Ivanaj, who said that he would "agree to working out such a programme but would not agree to work it".

No details of the proposed new programme are yet known, but Mr. Villa told me a few days ago, as he told Mr. Diamandopoulos, that it was being made the subject of careful study.

Respectfully yours,

Cleyee K. Huston
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

Copy to Athens.

CKH/ejs
710/er 842

A true copy of the signed original.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 875.4016 Greeks/43 FOR #380

FROM Albania (Huston) DATED Aug 28, 1935.

TO NAME 1—1127 GPO

REGARDING:

Relations between Albania and Greece.

Greek Minority Schools. Problem of - solved as the Albanian Government will permit them to choose their own teachers and operate the schools at their own expense.

b

768.75/52

52

768.75

No. 380 Tirana, August 28, 1936.

Confidential.

SUBJECT: Greek Minority Schools in Albania.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

Reverting to the question of the Greek minority schools in Albania I have the honor to report that the Greek Minister, Mr. Diamandopoulos, called today and informed me that this problem, long a thorn in the flesh of Greco-Albanian relations, appears now to have been satisfactorily settled.

Mr. Diamandopoulos, who has recently been named Greek Minister to Sofia, was received in audience a few days ago in order to take his leave of the King, and on that occasion he expressed his disappointment

that

that it seemed he would have to leave Albania without seeing the final adjustment of the minority school affair. The King replied by repeating the assurances already given, but let it be known that he felt some mistrust as to the treatment that might be accorded the Albanian minorities in northern Greece (Chamuria). Mr. Diamandopoulos says he then reiterated to the King the assurance that his Government would take whatever measures might be recommended by the League of Nations -----in response to the petition submitted by the Albanian communities-----to accommodate Albanian minorities in Greece. He added that he would be glad to secure the official confirmation of his Government in this regard should King Zog so desire.

The following day Foreign Minister Villa informed Mr. Diamandopoulos that steps were being taken to authorize the Greek communities to appoint the teachers in the minority schools and to operate them at their own expense (see also last page of my despatch No. 374 of August 13, 1935), adding that the Albanian Government was advising the Council of the League of the action taken. The Greek Minister subsequently learned from his consul in Gjinokaster and other sources that the authorities of the minority villages had called together the notables of the Greek communities and notified them that they are now free to select their own teachers and to operate their schools at their own expense. He told me that he accordingly considered the school question finally closed, at least for the time being.

Mr.

Mr. Diamandopoulos confessed that he had never believed Albania would give full satisfaction in this question, and attributed Zog's present amenability to (a) his reluctance to encourage discontent among the Greek communities at a time when there is already too much unrest in the country and he has just put down a small uprising, (b) his desire to remain in good odor at Geneva and (c) his hope of removing Greece's grounds of objection to Albania's entry into the Balkan Entente. When I asked him if he thought his Government would now approve Albania's inclusion in the Entente Mr. Diamandopoulos replied, with overtones of doubt in his voice, that he did not know.

Respectfully yours,

Cloyce K. Huston
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

Copy to Athens.

CKH/sjs
710/or 842

A true copy of the signed original.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 875.0011/22 FOR #73

FROM Albania (Grant) DATED March 21, 1936

TO NAME 1—1127 ere

REGARDING: Greek Minister, Pericles Skeferis, to Albania. Albanians accepted invitations issued by-to a luncheon altho the Minister fled the wedding of King Zog's sister. The Greek Minister was represented by his Charge d' Affaires a.i. at the wedding.

768.75/ 53

53

lec

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 875.001 Zog/119 FOR #584

FROM Albania (Grant) DATED Mar. 3, 1938

TO NAME 1-1127 OFO

REGARDING: Efforts being made in Albania to cement Greek-Albanian relations through the organization of an Albanian-Hellenic League. Press items relating to-

mb

768.75/54

5X

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 765.75/516 FOR Tel. 50- 10pm

FROM Albania (Grant) DATED April 20, 1939

TO NAME 1—1127 GPO

REGARDING: Relations between Greece and Albania. Dino, new Albanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, according to observation of the Greek Minister, was not optimistic over the Albaniam situation as long as Italian troops occupy the country.

768.75/55

55

fp

75

768.75/56

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 875.01/358 FOR Tel#57 11 p.m.

FROM Albania (Grant) DATED April 26, 1939

NAME

1—1127 GPO

REGARDING:

Greek Government establishes official relations with the New Albanian Government.

it cannot evacuate, demobilize, or abandon fortifications before the borderline is determined, and there is guaranteed the exchange of populations and the assurance of a new system of international guarantees. It wishes, however, to expedite the negotiations, and under no circumstances does it wish to delay the final solution to which it resolved, upon the emphatic advice of England and France and the many telegraphic appeals of chiefs of States headed by Mr. Roosevelt. Elevating the interests of the civilized world and peace and harmony above the tragic feelings of its own people, it has decided to make this sacrifice which, never before in history, was required under such concentrated pressure of an undefeated State without war. It has, therefore, the right to demand that the opposing side likewise show the same understanding for peace and harmony in Europe and the world. If, even at this advanced stage of the negotiations insurmountable difficulties should arise, the Czechoslovak Government suggests that the entire dispute be settled by an international conference or be submitted to Mr. Roosevelt for arbitration to which Czechoslovakia pledges its adherence in advance."

Czechoslovak Legation,
Washington, D. C.,
September 29, 1938.

4890/38

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 768.74/359 FOR Tel. 85, 11am

FROM Greece (MacVeagh) DATED May 16, 1939

TO NAME

1-1127 GPO

768.75/57

REGARDING:

Foreign press reports of recent incidents on Bulgarian and Albanian borders appear greatly exaggerated, if not wholly unfounded.

M

57

Central File: Decimal File 768.75, Political Relations Of States, Relations; Bi-Lateral Treaties., Greece And Albania, Jan.31, 1930 - May 16, 1939. January 31, 1930 - May 16, 1939. MS Turkey, Greece, and the Balkan States: Records of the U.S. Department of State, 1930-1944: Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations of Turkey, Greece, and the Balkan States, 1930-1939. National Archives (United States). Archives Unbound, link.gale.com%2Fapps%2Fdoc%2FSC5111391588%2FGDSC%3Fu%3Domni%26sid%3Dbookmark-GDSC. Accessed 21 June 2025.